The New REPUBLIC

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Wednesday September 23, 1931

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by EDNA LONIGAN

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The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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The Week

AMERICAN opinion, by and large, has assimilated the British political crisis by the simple formula of calling Premier MacDonald a hero for sacrificing his political future in the interest of his country. Nobody doubts MacDonald's courage and moral integrity; the question is not one of detached ethics but of wisdom. On that issue considerable light has been thrown by the responsible British weekly, The New Statesman and Nation, in its issue of August 29. The Labor Cabinet, writes this journal, had "completed its task of finding ways of balancing the budget." Cuts were agreed to, not in the standard unemployment benefit itself, but in the conditions and period of benefit. But the bankers said that this was not enough. "We have it on unimpeachable authority that the government were informed that the pound could only be saved by further credits from America, and that American institutions and investors would not find further credits unless the British government agreed, not merely to balance the budget, but, specifically, to cut down unemployment insurance." The Cabinet was asked to accept a 10-percent cut. Many members of the Cabinet, in view of the danger to the pound, were willing to accept it, and the Conservatives were asked if this would satisfy them. They replied that they would reserve the right to move further amendments to increase the cut. "Here, indeed, would have been a fine situation for the Labor party! To have accepted it would have been to be outmaneuvered, discredited and ridiculed. They would, in any case, have had the utmost difficulty, even as a united Cabinet, in persuading their followers to accept a 10-percent cut as a final reduction, only then to find themselves saddled with responsibility for a cut which would have proved in committee not final at all."

THESE Tory tactics, according to The New Statesman and Nation, were dictated not by national necessity but in the interest of the party policy. The 10-percent reduction in the "dole" is in itself comparatively unimportant. But it is a first step, "the crucial beginning of a policy of reductions," formerly opposed alike by the Labor party, the Liberals and the MacMillan Committee. "The Tories will easily coöperate in doing the unpopular, dirty work—in cutting down the "dole," forcing down wages and cutting education and the social services. In doing so they will probably increase unemployment, and the various remedies for unemployment must speedily come up for discussion. The Tory remedy is tariffs, and in the depth of depression to which the policy of deflation will soon have reduced the country, a very popular policy it will be. The Liberal cure for unemployment has been an extension of public works, a policy of spending, and that they have now renounced. An excellent tactical position for the Tories! To have used the name and prestige of MacDonald and the Liberals for the unpopular task of cutting, and then to be able to offer tariffs to restore business. But where will the Liberals be and where Mr. MacDonald?"

THE opportunity for the Tories and the bankers to employ these stratagems, of course, arose from the financial situation itself. The immediate threat to the pound, according to The New Statesman and Nation, was not justified by the objective facts, but by a psychological panic, brought on through unjustified propaganda against the "dole" and other

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measures. "The financiers themselves encourage an incipient panic, and then give the panic as a reason why the government must be governed in accordance with their will." The danger in the end became real, of course. But if the government had stood firm and had refused to be bullied, the flight from the pound could have been managed by drastic measures. Great Britain might have had to go off the gold-exchange standard, and that would have involved "state control of the entire money market and the banking system." This is the policy of a managed currency, long advocated by Mr. J. M. Keynes and other shrewd economists. It was the Labor Cabinet's fear of going off the gold standard and devaluating the pound that caused the crucial difficulty. As Mr. Keynes points out in a signed memorandum in the same issue, the consequence was that "those who like deflation and those who dislike state action got their innings." This means "a sole reliance on competitive wage reductions as a means of remedying unemployment." Such an effort, if justifiable at all, ought to be made by those who thoroughly believe in it. "Thus if the Labor government were not prepared (as they were not) deliberately to abandon the gold standard, it was their duty to resign." Mr. Keynes, of course, believes the policy of deflation is likely to be insupportable, and welcomes both the joining of the issue and the existence of a strong opposition.

GERARD SWOPE, president of the General Electric Company, has proposed a general plan for "stabilization of industry" to the National Electrical Manufacturers' Association. Every trade or industry would be compelled to form a trade association under federal supervision. Such associations would be allowed to enlarge their present practices of distributing information on volume of business, inventories, standardization, etc. Standard accounting practice would be required. The greatest legal innovation is that they would be permitted to "stabilize prices." This part of the plan is not elaborated. Another part, however, is described in great detail—the inauguration by these associations, on a national scale, of workmen's compensation, life and disability insurance, pensions and unemployment insurance. To all of these forms of insurance both employees and employers would contribute (but not the state or national governments) and both would participate in their management. The advantages, as set forth by Mr. Swope, are that these means to security would be made universal, and that no worker would lose them if it became necessary for him to transfer from one concern or location to another. The plan deserves careful study. At first sight, the insurance features seem a great advance over the existing sporadic practices of industry; if employers generally would support federal legislation of this kind we should have at one stroke a comprehensive system of insurance which it might take years to achieve by any other means. What trade associations could contribute to actual prevention of unemployment by such measures as "price stabilization" is, however, extremely doubtful.

SENATOR Borah, on the heels of his drastic suggestion about relief for the unemployed, has made an equally drastic suggestion regarding armament. He proposes that the five Great Powers—Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy and Japan—shall agree to suspend all naval building for the next five years. This is to be done primarily as an economic measure, in order to help these countries balance their budgets and to bring relief to their harassed taxpayers. The proposal is characteristic of Senator Borah: it is simple, dramatic, well timed—not only because the financial situation of the government is so acute, but because most of them are already far behind their schedules of building. It appeals to the common sense of everyone who has at heart the interests of peace and international understanding. But to say this is not to say that the Senator's suggestion lies in the realm of things possible. We have learned by painful experience that international limitation of armament is not to be achieved at the sudden behest of any senatorial or other John the Baptist. The militarists of the five nations may be counted upon to fight the proposal, each on the ground that their own country's needs are peculiar and desperate and have not been met. France in particular believes that she holds the whip hand, and must not lose her advantage. Only one thing could have made Mr. Borah's proposal worse from her point of view: the inclusion of land armaments as well. Gloomy as is the outlook for the Geneva conference next February, it is brighter than that for the Borah holiday. The statesmanship of the world is on the whole more likely to continue its present march toward destruction than to save itself by the application of simple measures of common sense.

THE long expected Fascist uprising in Austria has come—and gone. The attempted military coup by the Heimwehr, the private army of ultra-Nationalists, lasted only a day; most of its leaders are under arrest, and the others in hiding. How serious was the menace it is impossible to say; the failure was partly due to the fact that in some regions the uprising was started a day sooner than had been planned, because of a report that the plans had been betrayed to the Austrian government. Presumably the attempt was made now rather than later because Austria's financial difficulties and the humiliation caused by the forced renunciation of the German customs union have greatly increased popular discontent. While there are advantages in having this threat of rebellion liquidated, at least for a long time to come, the international consequences will be serious. Already the French have seized the chance to point out that both the Austrian and the German Fascists must be forcibly disarmed. With the failure of the attempt,

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Vienna is again gossiping, more busily than ever, about a French scheme to restore the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, with Otto as King-Emperor—the purpose being to detach Austria from Germany once and for all. France could hardly do this without throwing Rumania overboard, but it is argued that she would be willing to do so in exchange for the advantages derived from bringing both Austria and Hungary permanently into her orbit. Such a scheme, of course, would augment the ever present danger of a new war.

THE Communist interpretation of recent events in China may be gathered from Chinese Workers' Correspondence, a series of mimeographed reports issued every few days by an editorial committee in one of the coast cities. Since all reports from China are partisan, it is well to check the official ones against these, compiled by writers in daily danger of execution. The Nanking government, according to the Correspondence, now represents the American influence in China; it encourages American business firms at the expense of their European competitors and, incidentally, of native industry. The new government in Canton is supposed to represent British interests. It has formed alliances with the Northern war lords (exclusive of Chang Hsueh-liang) and is angling for the support of Japan. A first-class war is brewing between Chiang Kai-shek and Chang Hsueh-liang on the one hand—between Nanking and its Manchurian ally—and Canton and the war lords on the other. It will be a war, say the Communists, to decide whether China is to be exploited by American or Anglo-Japanese bankers and exporters. Money that should be devoted to relieving flood and famine sufferers is being spent for rifles, airplanes and machine guns.

THE flood sufferers, in fact, are regarded with suspicion by their own government, which fears that they are tainted with Communism, frequently refuses them admission to the towns, and sometimes even fires on them. The much advertised campaign against the Communist armies has proved a fiasco, since the generals in charge of it were more interested in lining their own pockets than in conducting battles against peasant troops who offer no prospect of booty. Meanwhile, the Communist governments which control large areas of south-central China are having troubles of their own. They too have suffered from the floods; supplies of food are running short; a strict blockade is enforced against them; and they are suffering internal dissensions caused by the hasty distribution of land among the peasants. They are short of ammunition, they are faced by superior forces armed with modern weapons, their adherents are being massacred along the border, but they can depend on the loyalty of the peasants, and in spite of everything they are widening their sphere of influence. Chinese Workers' Correspondence reports that the Fourth Red Army is now threatening to cut the Peiping-Hankow railway line.

IN THEORY, the American press is jealous of its liberties; but this doctrine is sharply limited in practice. There is, for example, hardly any concern among the country's newspapers over the astonishing reign of terror in Harlan, Kentucky. We believe it is true that no newspaper or press association is today reporting, accurately and fully, the facts about the coal strike there. Every reporter who has attempted to do this has either been shot, put in jail or hustled out of the county under threat of death. Harlan County, in short, is defying the press of the country to get the story; and with a few exceptions, including notably the Scripps-Howard chain, the press has taken this challenge lying down.

ANOTHER situation in which the press has long been equally supine is the supression of news by government agencies in Washington. Protest has at last been made, not by the papers themselves, but by some of the more spirited individual correspondents in the nation's capital, among whom a committee is being formed to express their grievances and seek remedies. They charge that President Hoover, who started out so bravely to avoid all the sins of his predecessors, has now become the most grievous offender. He cancels one press conference after another, and when he does see the newspaper men, refuses to answer their inquiries and distributes mimeographed copies of statements which might as easily be sent to the newspaper offices by a White House messenger. Other official sources of information are charged with deliberate misrepresentation, including occasional downright falsehood. Particularly serious allegations are made against the Federal Farm Board, which has concealed some of its most important acts even after news regarding them had been published abroad. It is, we believe, a cause for rejoicing that the Washington newspaper men are at last beginning to rebel against being made victims of the great Hoover propaganda machine; but we shall not throw our cap in the air until the journals these men represent show signs of equal interest in the preservation of their liberties.

MRS. Pauline Roth, the manager of a New York City bookshop, was recently tried on the charge of selling "Lady Chatterley's Lover." Her defense, which proved effective with judge and jury, was that she really had nothing to do with the bookshop: it was owned and managed by her husband Samuel Roth, a figure of some eminence in the underworld of publishing. Mr. Roth once spent ninety days on Welfare Island as a punishment for selling obscene books. His real distinction, however, lies not in the field of pornography, but in the growing business of literary piracy. He published large portions of Joyce's "Ulysses" without bothering to get the author's permission. He did the same with poems by T. S. Eliot. Again without consent from the author or his widow, he prepared a bowdlerized and ridiculous version of "Lady Chatterley's

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Lover," which he offered for public sale. There are good grounds for believing that he is responsible for many of the complete but unauthorized editions of the same book which are now being secretly peddled over the country. In fact, the copy of that book for selling which his wife was arrested might easily have been one printed by himself without any sort of consent from or remuneration to the author's family. We do not believe that selling "Lady Chatterley's Lover" to adults should be considered a misdemeanor. We believe, on the other hand, that pirating the same book is a crime for which some cruel and unusual punishment should be devised. Perhaps Mr. Roth should be dressed in sackcloth and ashes and forced to travel on his knees to D. H. Lawrence's grave, like a medieval penitent. Perhaps he should merely be placed in a comfortable armchair and forced to listen to the reading of pornographic novels, hour after hour, day after day, until finally he became so disgusted with the flesh and all its works that he was willing to enter a Trappist monastery.

IN Colorado, the coal miners of the unionized Rocky Mountain Fuel Company have decided to aid their company in a price and wage war against competitors by cutting their own wages in half for a period of three months and lending the proceeds to their employers. The non-union Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company has recently broken its promise to labor and reduced wages from 16 to 20 percent. Moreover, it has suddenly lowered the price of its coal, a ruinous blow at its rival, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, which, ever since the strikes of 1927, has carried out a model program of paying living wages and coöperating with labor. This enlightened policy has actually paid by increasing the output of coal. But for years the management of the unionized company, under the direction of Miss Josephine Roche, a former social worker who fell heir to the mines, has been a thorn in the side of capital. The period of industrial depression has offered a good opportunity to erase the nuisance. In the emergency, Miss Roche's union laborers, some of whom act as officers of the company, have resolved to enter the price war themselves, since the offensive of the Rockefeller company was clearly intended to dislodge them, and not watch passively the deadly struggle between capitalists. Not only are they lending their money to their company in a way that enables them to meet competition for the time being, but they are enlisting voluntarily as coal salesmen in order to market Rocky Mountain coal by direct appeals to the public. The affair is unique because organized laborers in Colorado are doing more than showing loyalty to just employers; they are engaging themselves wholeheartedly in a financial struggle. Win or lose, they will surely come out of this fight against Rockefeller enterprises knowing more than ever about their own power and their own economic interests.

Inflate or Deflate

THE DESPERATENESS of the existing economic situation is a common subject of discussion among economists, bankers, business men. Revival, hoped for as the result of a natural but undefined process of readjustment, has on several predicted occasions failed to arrive. Instead of getting out of depression, we seem to be getting deeper in. An unknown but certainly staggering amount of credits has become frozen, internationally and at home. Abroad there are the virtual bankruptcies of numerous "backward" countries, accompanied by the distressing and as yet unresolved crises in Germany and Great Britain. At home, farm and real-estate mortgages constitute more an embarrassment than an asset to banks and insurance companies in country and city. Prices of bonds and stocks sink; dividends are cut; profits fall even more than the returns on securities. Raw-material prices flutter about unprecedentedly low levels. Production lags; unemployment increases. All this affects confidence, which is often said to be the principal desideratum. No responsible authority can discern a definite and major sign of hope anywhere. We may believe that since we have always come out of previous depressions we shall come out of this one. But, as a conservative economist said the other day, the six or seven experiences of the sort which we have had since the industrial revolution are much too few in number to form the basis of a valid generalization.

The time has arrived to try drastic emergency measures—even if they involve a large risk. For the risk of doing nothing must be balanced against the risks of action. It may be that nothing we can do will be effective, but at any rate we shall scarcely be worse off as a consequence than if we allow the present degenerative tendency to continue. If every reasonable emergency palliative is tried and economic society fails to improve, we shall at least know that a basic reconstruction of that society is unavoidable.

Two main types of emergency action are proposed. One was put forth by the MacMillan Report in Great Britain, summarized in our pages a few weeks ago. It is, in one word, inflation. The other is that now inchoately advocated in many centers of business and banking, and set forth at some length in this week's New Republic by Miss Edna Lonigan. It is, in a word, deflation.

The inflationary prescription, which is supported by a large number of recognized economic authorities the world over, sees essentially the same flaws in our present situation which Miss Lonigan describes: lack of balance between consumption and production, arising from the unequal fall of prices. It would use banking systems and governments to expand the amount of credit and money-in-use, hoping by this means to bring the price of commodities and the incomes of debtors and primary producers

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up toward the level of prices payable to creditors and others whose incomes have not fallen so rapidly. Miss Lonigan recommends the opposite remedy for the same disease—rapid and decisive cuts in the prices and incomes which have not yet fallen.

We have several times expressed doubts concerning the feasibility of inflation. Low interest rates for new loans, already in effect for a considerable period, do not force the expansion of credit, because acceptable borrowers cannot use the money, and unacceptable borrowers cannot borrow at any rate. The inflationary theorists argue that if the central banks would buy acceptances and government securities in large volume, they would thereby force the commercial banks to use their resources in buying other types of bonds and in extending mortgages and loans of all kinds. The resulting expansion of credit would be about ten times the purchases of the central banks. Perhaps this would be the case; but the doubt remains whether the commercial banks would be any more successful in finding borrowers who could use the money profitably, and who thus could be sure of repaying it, than they are at present. It is difficult to lend money to those who need it most. Should we pour our credit into foreign nations which have already borrowed too much, into a construction industry already suffering from overbuilding, into loans to farmers who have already produced a whole series of unsalable surpluses, into expanded instalment sales to consumers already tending to live beyond their incomes? There are formidable obstacles to the policy of expanding money-in-use by a forced expansion of loans.

Miss Lonigan appreciates these obstacles, but we believe she greatly underestimates the obstacles in the way of her own policy. How are we to deflate the creditors in the interest of the already deflated debtors, if we are to do so promptly and universally? In order that this may happen, interest rates must be cut proportionally to the fall in prices of raw materials. Are we to issue a decree slicing in half—or more—the interest on outstanding mortgages and bonds? And if we do this, must we not cut banking obligations, insurance benefits, annuities and rents simultaneously? What about the social upheavals sure to be caused by a policy of drastic wage deflation? Beside considerations such as these, the reductions which may be made in the prices of manufactured and retailed articles, desirable as such reductions may be, seem of minor importance. It is no wonder that many economists prefer the policy of inflation as the less painful remedy, and one capable of more prompt application.

Aside from the difficulties inherent in effectuating either of these policies, we see a common flaw underlying the logic of both. They assume that there was at some previous time a sort of natural balance among prices which was healthy and which would tend, if restored and protected, to be self-perpetuating. One would restore it at the old level, the other at a lower one. We believe this assumption to be unfounded. We believe the source of the depression itself to be closely associated with a lack of balance in the complex structure of prices, incomes and production, which existed before the crash arrived. Restoring the pre-depression relationship among these factors, if it were possible, would be no permanent cure.

In spite of the logical flaw in the arguments of both inflationists and deflationists, however, we admit that the disparities among prices, incomes and production which existed, let us say, in 1928, have in many cases not been automatically remedied by the depression, but have been made worse. There is no time to install a delicately engineered control of these matters—essential as that will be in the long run—if we are to halt the present degeneration of trade. Crude remedies are the only ones promptly available.

In spite of obstacles and doubts, the situation demands an immediate and courageous policy. And the outlines of that policy appear to be clear. If inflation can work, it is greatly preferable to deflation. An attempt to apply it should therefore be made with all the vigor and ingenuity possible. Let the central banks apply an expansionist open-market policy—all over the world if possible, but at any rate in this country, where at present much of the gold is concentrated. At the same time, let the government intervene as an agency of distributing purchasing power where it will do the most good—by direct relief to the unemployed and the destitute farmers, and by a really large public-construction program, financed as far as possible by borrowing. Let us give this policy a thorough trial for, say, six months. If it raises prices of commodities, increases employment and restores confidence, well and good. A check would have to be put on inflation in time to avoid disastrous reaction. But the banks have learned much about how to do that. If, at the end of the trial period, this experiment has negative results, or results not adequate to the need, we shall have to turn about and batter down the obstinate prices which had previously refused to fall. In doing so we cannot be too much impressed by vested interests. We must cut first, not wages, but prices controlled by quasi-monopolies of some sort or other, interest rates and the incomes which depend on interest rates. We must cut any taxes which will affect prices—like taxes on real estate, sales taxes and tariffs. We must, of course, deal drastically with international debts. Certain items of this program might well be carried on coincidentally with the attempt to inflate.

There is no assurance that either prescription will work. There is every assurance that neither will, in the long run, be sufficient to provide an economy with a healthy constitution. But the patient's temperature is sinking fast, and something must be done.

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Mexico in the League

THE ENTRANCE of Mexico into the League of Nations is an event which will be important rather through its long aftermath than through any immediate results. It strengthens the League in its relations with the American hemisphere, and it adds to the prestige of Mexico throughout the world. But more important to the United States than either of these results is its effect upon our own Latin American relations, and particularly upon the Monroe Doctrine.

When the League Covenant was written, it was taken as a matter of course by its framers, including President Wilson, that the United States would become a member, and the Covenant was carefully framed to avoid any affront to our tender susceptibilities. It abolished, or at least was supposed to abolish, all "spheres of influence" of the Great Powers, substituting for them the mandate system. It was argued at the time, however, that if the United States felt that any doubt was thrown upon the Monroe Doctrine, difficulties might be put in the way of our joining, and so a special article (No. 21) was written, saying that

> nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace.

From the beginning, this clause proved a bitter pill for those Latin American countries which were invited to join the League. They felt, as they feel now, that the Monroe Doctrine is not a regional understanding, but a unilateral policy of the United States, a policy to which they have the gravest objection. However, many states swallowed their pride and joined the League, believing that the sounding board of Geneva would prove an effective medium to reveal to the world their dislike for the Doctrine and distrust of our purposes.

Of these nations Mexico was not one, for the simple reason that when the first invitations to join the League went out, she was not included. President Wilson was at that time still angry over the trouble between the United States and our southern neighbor just before the War and during its first two years. He felt that the Mexican government was not entitled to take its place among the responsible powers of the world, and since his influence was still tremendously powerful, Mexico was excluded. The slight was one which deeply wounded the sensitive spirits of Mexican leaders, and for twelve years they remained aloof.

The invitation to Mexico to join the League Assembly, offered and accepted last week, is being generally interpreted to mean that the Geneva body has at last given up hope of the United States' becoming a member at any early date, and is prepared to flout our opinion if need be. This explanation is obviously somewhat unrealistic; there is no evidence that the present American government has any objection to Mexico's joining the League, or is interested at this late day in seeing Wilson's policies respected. What is important is the fact that Mexico, in joining, expressly repudiated any interest in the Monroe Doctrine or any obligation under Article 21 of the League Covenant. The League accepted her membership and by so doing tacitly agreed that this reservation was satisfactory. Some interesting legal questions are raised by this procedure, as well as some even more interesting speculations as to the future. Will not the other Latin American states which are members of the League now follow Mexico's example? If they do, shall we not have an open, general repudiation of the Doctrine? What will happen the next time the United States attempts to intervene, in Nicaragua or Haiti or Cuba, and uses the Doctrine as a pretext?

The point is one which does not need to be labored. The Hoover administration is moving away from the old interpretation of the Doctrine as rapidly as it feels the public dignity permits. The Reuben Clark memorandum and the speech of Acting Secretary of State Castle at the Virginia Institute of Public Affairs were both efforts to put the world on notice that we were no longer actuated solely by the simple-hearted imperialism borrowed a generation ago from Kipling and the elder Chamberlain, which was primarily responsible for the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine from about the year 1900 to about 1925. The Hoover philosophy is more a trader's than a banker's, and still less an old-fashioned political imperialist's. Our present concern is less to force big loans upon Latin countries and then take over their administration to ensure collection, than to sell them goods in the largest possible quantities—an aim which is immeasurably forwarded by having the good will of their populations. At the same time it is well to take note that Mexico has now publicly snapped her fingers at the Monroe Doctrine; that the League has stood by in silent approval while she has done so; and that in the Latin world the incident will be interpreted as one more evidence that Hispano-America is growing up and will some day be able to shake off the last vestiges of our dominance.

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Prices Must Come Down!

Inflation or deflation: there are two suggested remedies for hard times. Must the country choose one or the other if it is to halt the rapid drift toward disaster? Miss Lonigan prefers the second remedy. For a discussion of the question, see the editorial "Inflate or Deflate" in the present issue. —THE EDITORS.

FOR TWO YEARS we have been in the grip of a depression which we now admit is one of the worst in history. We are faced with the shameful spectacle of wheat piled high on bankrupt Western farms, while men stand in long gray lines in the cities asking for a bit of bread. The crisis is world-wide and no responsible person will predict the end of it. We say glibly that the bottom has been reached, knowing well that we may scrape bottom for many months or even many years.

Have we not been accepting all too easily the theory that business cannot be helped while it is down? The human cost of two winters of unemployment has appalled the most hard-hearted. Can we face a third winter of unemployment without examining every detail of our present impasse, without putting aside every prejudice, every theory, every emotion, which may impede us in finding a solution? We wait for some mysterious process to bring about the "upturn." But are we doing everything we can to understand how business functions in the midst of hard times and where, if anywhere, we might limit its evil effects?

We are coming vaguely to see two stages in every depression, the immediate economic consequences, and the more elusive but more deadly indirect consequences. In 1921 we saw that unemployment caused a serious decrease in purchasing power because the workers were unable to buy the goods with which we were so oversupplied. Their forced economies caused a secondary shrinkage in business and employment, and delayed still more the processes of recovery. This connection is both important and true, and President Hoover's prompt measures to limit the spread of unemployment by public works and by keeping up wage levels were a response to that theory.

Partly as a result of the President's thorough trying out of this idea, we now know that it is not enough. The results of a business depression are worse than the worst we had realized, but they are not caused by unemployment. Unemployment is itself one of the secondary results of industrial depression. Efforts to limit its ill effects are most important, but they are not enough. We must find the essential factor that determines the *prolongation,* as distinct from the *cause,* of industrial depressions.

The thesis of this article is that the essential factor in the depression phase is the credit and price system. The characteristic, the fundamental, symptom of business crises is the immediate contraction of credit. If the volume of credit has shrunk in half, it must be followed by an equivalent decrease in prices, or the volume of business will be curtailed. At present, prices are reduced over a small part of the economic system only. Retail prices, legal prices, labor prices and capital charges move not at all. The contraction in prices must take place, and so it now takes place with terrific violence in the small area where prices are still flexible.

The result is a violent contraction in trade. Since price changes are not distributed equally throughout the system, they fall with crushing force on a few, usually the producing classes, and the necessary curtailment of production leads to another contraction of credit and to the unemployment that still further paralyzes the economic system.

We have then, in the failure of our price mechanism, the essential factor in the *continuance,* as against the *cause,* of depressions. The havoc wrought by price rigidity is worse than that caused by the original depression, as the fever which nature devises to carry off the waste products of disease may be more deadly than the disease itself.

The remedy is price reductions, all along the line, until prices of rent and gas and electricity, bond and mortgage interest, have gone as low as the supply of money. Alice has drunk of the bottle which will make her half her natural size. So far only her head and one side have shrunk. Her other shoulder and hip, her arms and legs, are still their old size, although they are slowly shrinking. She cannot walk naturally, or use her limbs, until all of her has shrunk in proportion. The complaint is that more price reductions would cause havoc in industry. The answer is that havoc we are bound to have. Price equalization will cause far less havoc than a policy of drift.

The first source of our confusion is our failure to see how much the supply of money contracts as soon as the signs of bad industrial weather appear. We think of money in terms of the available gold and paper credit. The important factor is *money-in-use.* It is money-in-use that shrinks in a business crisis. Money is withdrawn from business and piled high in savings banks. The savings banks cannot put it back into business because bonds are unstable, because builders are not building, because

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business men are not planning new extensions. We have been misled by the figures of savings and fail to realize that they mean not a gain but a shrinkage of money-in-use. Commercial banks have less money-in-use because business men are not borrowing, because there is less commercial paper, because there is less need for currency.

The gold or the paper or the bank credit is there, but we have a shrinkage of enormous proportions in the volume of circulating money. We have failed to see the gap that appears in hard times between the supply of money and money-in-use. If the gold is in someone's stocking, if the paper is lying in the savings banks, if the credit is "frozen," it has temporarily ceased to function as money, and the effect is as complete as if a hostile army had carried it away.

We arrive at the same idea another way in talking of the velocity of money. It is not the amount of money alone that is important, but the frequency with which it is "turned over." It is not the stocks on a merchant's shelves that measure his business but the number of times a year they are turned over. In places where the velocity of money is high it does more work than in backward countries where its velocity is low. At the height of prosperity—not inflation—velocity is very great. In periods of depression the supply of money may be constant (except for the volume of bank credit) but its velocity is reduced.

One trouble lies in the extreme confusion in the meanings of the word money. Money may refer to our individual possessions, to our national wealth, to commercial wealth, to income or to the circulating medium. Here we are concerned only with money as a medium of exchange—as a supply of specific concrete things, either gold, paper or bank balances that operate mechanically to facilitate the exchange of our commodities. In good times, money-in-use is the same as the supply of gold, paper and credit. In a depression, part of that available supply is virtually erased as money because it is not in circulation.

We do not know how much the amount of money-in-use has decreased, but it is a large decrease. Let us assume that it is 50 percent. Then it is the second premise of this article that all prices ought to have been reduced 50 percent, if production was not to be curtailed. That would not have prevented all strain in the economic structure but it would have prevented most of it.

It is important to remember that *all* prices need to come down. It is money that is askew.

Mr. Carl Snyder, of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, has demonstrated that the index of the volume of credit, divided by that of the volume of business, gives almost exactly, for each year, the index of the general price level. Prices are money divided by trade. Prices are affected by the volume of credit (which is an index of money-in-use) as promptly as a man's head is affected by the impact of a sledgehammer. There are other factors, as a man may save his head if he has on an iron casque. But that is no proof that sledgehammers are not bad for heads.

This relation between credit, business and prices is usually interpreted to mean that, if the volume of credit falls, the price level must fall. It is equally good evidence that if the volume of credit falls and a large part of our price structure is rigid, then the volume of trade must contract. If credit goes down and prices do not, then a shrinkage in trade is a mathematical certainty.

What actually happens under our present system when the price movement is downward? When wheat or corn or stocks are offered in the market, and no buyers appear, the price is lowered until demand equals supply. That is, in theory, the way all our prices are made, but the theory is misleading. Only a small proportion of our prices is set in free markets, and that proportion is decreasing.

Manufacturers of agricultural machinery do not have to put all their plows and reapers on a falling market, as farmers do, because their goods are not perishable. They know there will not be a full crop of farm machines next season. A great many money transactions have gone into the productive process and manufacturers fear to lose the money they have invested. So they hold back part of their stock, reduce employment, and try to keep the price as high as possible. Such prices might be called cumulative prices because of the influence of a series of money transactions on the apparent cost.

Retail prices are even more apparently fixed by a series of money transactions. In addition, retail sellers are afraid that if they lower prices it will be very difficult to put them up when prosperity returns. Also the unorganized public is in no position to make effective demands for lower prices. The fourth type of price includes legally fixed charges like telephone and gas rates, mortgage interest and taxes.

There is nothing new in recognizing the difference in rapidity of change in raw materials, wholesale, retail and fixed prices. The point is to recognize that their essential character is an *interference with market price,* with the safety-valve arrangements by which prices used to be reduced in hard times. Instead of prices fixed in a free market, we have four types of price, in three of which the influence of money transactions and the effect of high capital requirements enable sellers to make less and less adjustment to market conditions. Our price system works on the way up but not on the way down.

When the downward pressure comes now, it presses with terrible weight on the producers of wheat and copper and corn and oil; it presses rather severely on the wholesale producers of manufactured goods; it squeezes the retail dealers a little, and the owners of fixed incomes at first not at all.

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It is not a question of the ethics of the system. If large parts of our credit supply are suddenly destroyed, someone must suffer. The present system is as useful as any if it works. The question is: How does this lopsided readjustment of the price structure actually work?

The money that the farmer or manufacturer receives from his sales is the fund from which he must pay all his current costs of doing business. There is no other fund from which these costs can be paid. If he sells at the new low price and his cash return is not enough to pay rent and mortgage interest and labor costs at the old price level, something must give way. First the producer forgoes all hope of profit and reduces his living expenses. If the one-sided fall is rapid enough, he soon cannot hire enough labor or buy enough fertilizer or materials for the coming year. His future income is jeopardized, and some of his workers are unemployed. Finally, he may not be able to pay mortgage interest, taxes or bond interest. Then he soon ceases to be a producer.

If all prices are equalized in a short time, only a few producers are forced to the wall. If the adjustment is slow, there is a continuing increase in the number of men who are forced permanently out of the producing and managing class, as the money they take in for their goods is able to buy less and less of what they need for next year's expenses.

In every prolonged period of falling prices, then, a portion of our enterpriser class is extinguished during the period of strain while prices are falling unevenly. We have always flattered ourselves that this was an inefficient group of producers, but no one has ever offered proof of that fact. At any rate, we are all agreed about the seriousness of the result. The first curtailment of production following the congestion in prices begins the terrible wave of unemployment which, by reducing purchasing power, serves to spread the paralysis still further. The elimination of more enterprisers through bankruptcy as the price distortion continues carries distress to even more desperate lengths.

The greatest difficulty, however, that faces the producer in hard times is that no one knows how far prices will fall. An unevenly falling price level is as good for the speculator as it is bad for industry. He has learned so to manipulate public opinion that he keeps prices disturbed, and uncertainty sends them lower than economic necessity ever could.

Over and over again during the last year, if some superhuman mind could have assured us that the bottom had been reached, that the road ahead was clear, however rough, individual enterprisers all over the world could have taken up again the task of changing industry into high gear. There is no superhuman mind on whom we can rely in economic affairs. We must see ourselves that the roads are made clear, or go slowly. When no one knows how low prices may go, when no one knows what new contractions in business may be ahead because the price structure remains out of balance, morbid fear and speculative manipulation take the place of work and courage. Not economic but psychological factors now hold us down.

We have spoken of the effects of artificially maintained prices on the producer's ability to buy new labor and supplies to keep his business going. Even more general is the effect of artificial prices on demand. The same psychological and legal influences that keep up employers' costs keep up consumers' costs.

About half as much money is in circulation to move all the goods. This means that half as much money can be exchanged for each article. People cannot buy the same amount of goods at the old prices any more than a badly shrunken dress can cover a stout woman. They can buy only half or three-quarters as much. Furthermore, they will not buy. When they know that the selling price of their bank stocks has gone down from $500 to $75, and that they have to pay the same amount for rent, they are not in a mood to buy. When the price of wheat has gone down to fifty cents but the restaurant charges the same prices for food, they prefer to eat at home.

Consumers have no habit of organization in America, and most people will not wrangle over the hundred prices they have to accept a day. But like the great silent voter, they have one weapon. They can decide not to do anything, and not all the election-district captains or all the high-powered salesmen can make them come out of their shells. Like Mr. Dooley, they can fly into a great state of calm about things.

So far we have isolated two facts peculiar to the depression phase, which, when neglected, cause intense suffering above what would be caused by the original depression alone. First, the uneven fall in prices puts producers at a great disadvantage to the other classes in bargaining, so that they are forced to curtail purchasing and reduce employment. Second, the decline in borrowing by manufacturers, the decline in purchasing by discharged employees and the deliberate withholding of funds by angry consumers, all serve to reduce still further the volume of money-in-use, and thus we reach a second stage. It now becomes necessary to have much greater general price reductions to restore stability than would have been needed to maintain stability with the first contraction. We saw in 1921 that unemployment causes a secondary decline in business. The contraction of money-in-use at the beginning of a depression, if ignored, causes even more serious evils which spread the depression much farther than it needed to go.

We have always had unevenly falling prices. But we have to remember that every improvement in business in recent times has tended to increase the elasticity of credit and to decrease the elasticity

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of prices. Every new economy in the use of gold, every reduction in currency requirements, the wider use of checks, have all made possible more and more transactions when the tendency was upward. That meant more chance for contraction when business was flattening out. On the other side, legal regulation of prices for gas and electricity, trade regulation of prices, increasingly large corporations and chains, with their power over market price, have all served to widen the area where price control is possible and to narrow and deepen the pressure in the small area left elastic. As Mr. Wiggin has shown, even the large corporation surpluses, which we thought a bulwark against trouble, have intensified the present deadlock by letting firms postpone reducing prices.

We cannot have fixed prices in an economic system based on market price. If price is the balance wheel which equalizes demand and supply, we must have flexible, not rigid, prices. Fixed, predictable prices are highly desirable. It would be nice if we could have them. But we cannot. To give fixity to some prices is only to increase the variability of the others. Business is a flux. Money is a variable. Demand and supply are in constant change. We cannot keep prices rigid. We can only pretend to.

There is a good deal of loose thinking about a stable price level. Of course, we all want a stable price level, but we do not want fixed prices. Prices are the thermometers of industry. Into thermometers we put not lead but mercury, something that will quiver with every change in temperature. Then if we find the mercury rising, we stabilize the fever, not the thermometer. Attempts to keep commodity prices stable are like putting lead in the thermometer, or tacking the magnetic needle to the north line of the compass. The idea of a stable gold price is one of the great discoveries for the maintenance of sound business. But prices are vital for recording the state of industry, pointing to what is amiss, so that we may correct it. We can keep our prices fixed by artificial means just as we can keep steam from escaping by sitting on the safety valve.

If we have isolated here the germ that is keeping industry in a state of prostration, what can we do about it? What we need is that all four types of prices, market, cumulative, psychological and legal, should move downward freely, when a shrinkage in our true money supply makes lower prices necessary. The four types need not all go down equally far, but their descent must not be artificially blocked.

It is true that there is no machinery in industry or politics for bringing about concerted influence on the price level. There is a strong sentiment among business men against low prices and against interference of any kind. The special questions of bond and mortgage interest, and of labor, present great difficulty. It will be hard to determine how far prices should fall. In spite of these admitted obstacles there is no reason why we cannot, by taking thought and without bringing in any new theories of industrial control, work out a way by which the price mechanism can function smoothly on the way down.

The first necessity is to recognize in our delayed repricing the obstacle we need to attack. As soon as we admit that, with a contraction in money, prices must go down—evenly and promptly—then enterprise will be concerned with how to reduce prices. Prestige will go to the dealer who reduces first. Business leaders will be thinking, not how they can keep prices up, but how they can keep their goods moving and their costs down. The sacrifice of income will be much less than under the present scheme. The obstacles are psychological, not economic. They are in the business tradition, not in the business mechanism.

This plan of course includes reductions in wages, because all money prices are askew. It is true that the doctrine of high wages is one of the most profitable industrial policies ever invented. It is also true that wages must come down. Employers cannot pay high wages without money unless they are magicians who can make rabbits come out of hats. It is not now a question whether wages will come down or stay up, but whether they will come down furtively before the cost of living, or openly after living costs have been cut.

If wages could be reduced 20 or 30 percent below the 1929 rates, employers would have a new incentive to increase production. Prices could be forced lower down, more goods would be sold and more men and women could be taken back to work. If with a cut in wage rates the same fund was paid out to labor in more work the gain to business and to labor would be far greater than a continuance of the present deadlock.

Rents are the principal burden in the city worker's budget. If rents come down, those owners who bought at inflation prices will lose, but those who bought at more normal prices will still be able to earn an income. If rents do not come down, men must continue to pay too large a share of their reduced incomes in order to give the speculative landlord a profit, while their inability to purchase shoes and furniture is causing the honest merchant's bankruptcy.

Retail dealers argue that they have already reduced prices, and they have statistics to prove it. But the statistics will not convince any consumer. Restaurants have not reduced prices. Banks have not reduced their required balances. Stores advertise sales where the items are too few, or the reduction too small. Dentists, doctors, hairdressers, are afraid their prestige will be lost if they announce temporary reductions. Only a sweeping movement for price reduction will draw them in.

Retailers always have the convenient excuse of overhead. But overhead is one of the items that particularly needs to be repriced. Restaurants

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that have reduced the salaries of their waitresses complain of overhead, forgetting that they expect a building they own to be credited with the income it earned in a period of inflation, or that they are carrying short-term machinery and equipment at prices they paid, instead of at replacement costs. All the items that go into overhead should be re-examined and reduced to their lowest possible price. Fixed notions about overhead charges are keeping many manufacturers and dealers from cutting prices and increasing activity today.

At present we are not in the beginning but in the middle of a depression. Some business men have courageously adjusted costs and faced the future instead of the past. But the others should feel the pressure and feel it at once. We cannot have normal business until the price structure is again in balance. We can finish the task in six months, or take six years, as we like. Recovery will not begin until we have attacked it.

If we can find the technique of orderly price reductions we shall be rid of one of the great errors of business history. Low prices do not cause any more distress to business than high ones. Even falling prices are not a barrier to production. It is harder to make money when prices are falling than when they are rising. But that may be the greatest evil of inflation—the false sense of mastery of their task that comes to business men when money is easy to make.

There is a widespread feeling that any shock to business now would delay recovery and cause further unsettlement. It is true that a series of political wrangles about what is good for business would still further weaken our anemic confidence. But courageous leadership would increase confidence instead of weakening it. The remedy of price reductions would be drastic, but definite and brief. With a temporary bridge swung over the chasm of business depression, it would be possible to move forward. Movement would quicken the industrial body and the impulse would be contagious. The worst would be over.

Any objections to a drastic but temporary remedy ignore the extremely high price we are going to pay for inaction. The courage of our enterprisers is being strained to the breaking point. The hope of our workers, their industrial character, is being undermined. The capitalist cannot invest his money. The profits of years are wiped out as one dealer after another goes into bankruptcy. Houses, mortgages, bonds, decline in value as the hope of earnings decreases. The choice now is not between health and sickness. It is between slow, wasting desperate illness and a serious operation.

Our present method is an endurance contest, which involves holding prices as high as possible and letting those firms go under which have not capital enough to consume. The alternative suggested here really means: reduce prices as low as possible and let those firms disappear whose management has not ingenuity enough to do business on a lower cost basis. By the second route we can keep up the volume of trade, keep men employed and keep money in use.

Business can be healthy only with a normal volume of transactions. Reduced volume is ruinous. Overhead piles up, costs are high, profits vanish. Inequality of prices blocks movement and equality of prices will help restore it. If volume is increased, workers are drawn back, income rises, profits become visible again. The money held out of circulation by fear will begin to come back, as leaves come peeping out in the first warm days of spring. Business men must keep up volume even to the point of actual loss on the materials and labor that they use in current production. Only then are they helping to restore business—and their own profits—to normal.

It may be argued that the way to restore volume is to raise prices by putting more money into circulation. There are three difficulties. It does no good for the Reserve Banks to put money into the market through purchases of stocks and commercial paper, because the funds will not be taken up. They will not be money-in-use. If, instead, the government starts new construction projects or otherwise directly employs labor and management, it can stimulate business. But the government can never put in large enough sums to offset the present shrinkage. We should have to learn the technique of lowering prices if the government poured all its conceivable resources into the market. But we must remember that the government can raise money only by levying a tax on our true national income. If a depression means that our earning power has gone down, the government may redistribute a little of the shrunken income, but it cannot add to it. Mr. John Maynard Keynes and the English economists are right in seeing rising prices as a sign of improvement. They fail to see the reality of the depression phase, which must be dealt with in and of itself. Lower prices are in themselves a device for forcing the lower costs which we need before business health can be restored.

There is no one cause for industrial depressions. Our mistakes in foreign policy in recent years, for instance, were far more serious than our mistakes in monetary policy. We shall have to make amends for those errors. But at present we are in the depression phase. Whatever the cause, the depression phase is characterized by changes in the mechanics of our currency and price system. We need to understand and to control those changes, if we would restore the volume of trade and permit labor, capital and management to work.

It is a truism of business that those firms which admit a setback and write off their losses at once are the first to recover. It is also a truism of business that most reorganizations are made when it is too late.

EDNA LONIGAN.

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Red Ship

ON THE EVENING of April 23, 1930, I set out for Moscow on a Soviet ship, in order to collect material for a book on Bolshevism. It pains me to admit it, but it is the truth. I set out to join the great horde of scoundrels, duffers and liars who have been flooding the book markets of the world for the past ten years with books about the Bolsheviks. I had already traveled in an honest fashion to various parts of the world, for the sole purpose of breathing, walking, lying, sitting, eating, drinking, loving; never for the purpose of squinting at strange buildings or at odd people, or to scavenge information for newspapers and learned societies about customs that are different from our own.

"That is the captain," whispered the first mate, who sat beside me.

I saw an extremely tall man take off a shabby overcoat and hang it on one of the pegs behind the door. Then, with a hollow cough, he slowly turned about and scanned the table. Rarely in my life have I seen such an impressive countenance, head and body. His hair was shorn to the bone of his skull, so that it was impossible to determine its color. But he had not shaved for a week or more, so that his jaws and upper lip were covered with a gray stubble. His face was like that of a monk, somber, brooding, as of one who looks out from a holy place on a wicked world. He had a powerful jaw and an equally strong mouth, as is generally the case with fanatics of more than ten years' standing. The continual tension caused by the presence in their minds of a fixed idea forces the muscles of their jaws and lips to develop. His eyes were also those of a fanatic. For it was obvious that they were by nature gentle and almost feminine, whereas concentration on ideas of desperate violence had succeeded in giving them an outward appearance of ferocity. He had a beautiful forehead, high, broad, capable of holding great knowledge behind its wall. His nose was ugly, short and stubby.

From this head, his body dropped away to a great length, almost supine, but with the suggestion of loose strength given by a sleeping panther. It would be dangerous to rouse him. His hands were so big and his arms were so long.

He wore a shabby gray Tolstoyan blouse and an equally shabby pair of trousers. Contrasting his shabby clothing with the pride in his countenance, I could not help feeling that he dressed shabbily through vanity; that same monkish trait which makes "the fanatics of poverty" go abroad in sackcloth and ashes.

He neither spoke nor looked at me. Nobody else took any notice of him. Neither did he notice anybody else. He helped himself from the dish in the center of the table. The conversation went on. Now those that were left in the room were bantering a new arrival.

At first I thought the new arrival was a good-looking boy, rather effeminate, even more effeminate than the painted apprentice I had seen the previous evening. Then the chief mate leaned over and whispered:

"You see who come now. The third mate. She is a woman."

Now I examined the new arrival in astonishment. It was obviously a woman, and except for the fact that she wore trousers and pilot jacket buttoned to the throat, she did not look very different from the manly women one sees about London. But her face was different from the faces of our lonely ones. Although her features were delicate and pretty, her face showed great force of character, together with that harshness always acquired by a woman in a position of authority over men. Her manners were like those of the men; at least she attempted to be like them. But as I watched her, I noticed that she toyed with her food a little pettishly and seemed a trifle irritated by the lack of refinement. The first mate obviously disapproved of her, for he kept winking at me and raising his eyebrows sarcastically. The others made fun of her without mercy. There was no question of sexual desire at the root of their bantering. It was as if she were a young sister who had insisted on joining an excursion which was really for men only. Even the somber captain joined in the bantering.

Presently he said to me:

"You have never seen a woman serving as mate before?"

He spoke slowly, but in perfect English. His voice was almost as refined as that of a woman.

"No," I said. "I have never seen women officers before on ships. We have none."

"I know," he said with a smile. "It is the result of our revolution. There are already two in our merchant service. I don't know whether it will be a success, having women as officers. I don't know why any woman would want to take on this bloody job. Still, if they want to do it, they are perfectly free. She is a good officer, but a bit strict. A little too strict, perhaps."

"She would be," I said, "in order to prove that she is not feminine."

"Yes," he said. "But our position is very difficult. We have to try and organize a vast country, millions and millions of people, to give them ma-

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chines and ships and education and all the products of modern civilization. And we have hardly anybody to do it with."

"But," I said, "the great thing is that you are working."

"I am glad you see that," said he. "Tell me. What do you think of revolution in England?"

He looked at me closely, as he placed the stem of his cigarette holder between his ascetic yet strangely sensual lips. I had a curious feeling that he was like a satyr, or a Jesuit, or some astute animal. An Oriental? Playing with me? No, no. It was just insane pride. He was the embodiment of some insane idea. That was why he was so strong. Otherwise I was stronger.

"I cannot imagine a social revolution from within taking place in England," I replied. "The English know perfectly well they would lose their Empire and become an overpopulated island, a third-rate nation, condemned to a vassal decadence like the Egyptians under Rome. But a revolution from without. . . . That is possible. Communism by conquest is possible, even in England. Already, as you say, the Lion and Unicorn of England is confronted with the Bolshevik Sickle and Hammer in India and elsewhere in the East."

He went on looking at me closely and I began to feel uncomfortable. I again felt that no matter how much I wanted to become a Bolshevik, no matter how much I admired their ideas, their youth, their virility, I must remain outside; or even if brought in, baptized in their faith, grafted on their society, I must still remain suspect and in reality an alien, because a different religion and culture had become part of my being.

Now I saw the captain as a great Inquisitor, guarding the ship, and I clearly understood that he and his ship and his crew were all members of a band of scouts, sent out into Europe to examine the strongposts of the enemy.

I went out on deck, in a state of high nervous tension. I felt that this ship was driving me mad, or else that I was unable to endure close contact with this mighty force, this Bolshevism. I could not feel at ease. Either I was watched by the captain or by one of his crew. It was a delusion, perhaps, a waking nightmare; but I felt it. And I felt a criminal for being hostile to this beautiful and healthy force.

As I expected, as soon as I got on deck, the doctor approached me and took charge.

"Come and see my hospital," he said.

I submitted. I had not enough energy to resist. He showed me his hospital, which was perfectly equipped, with an operating room and a room for accouchement. He ranted about the Soviet hygienic laws. He talked about his work in liquidating medical ignorance among the crew. And all the time I could only see the captain's somber eyes and the mate's lascivious grin and the ship prowling about among European cities, collecting information for the Red hordes that were massing and singing their battle songs on the steppes. Woe to Europe! He brought me to the quarters of the crew.

"You will notice," he cried in triumph, "that their quarters are as good as the quarters of the officers. They eat exactly the same food. They are armed in accordance with the law for the militarization of the proletariat, to protect this ship, which is the property of the proletariat, against counter-revolution among the officers and against the spies of the bourgeoisie. They are reading books on Marxism and the Materialistic Conception of History, to prepare them for the great struggles of industrialization of the Soviet Union, the liquidation of illiteracy and the overthrow of world capitalism. They are the real vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat."

He showed me the great room in the men's quarters where the meetings of the ship's Soviet were held.

"Here," he cried proudly, "I shall bring you to show you how all come here and make plans to better ship rule, save oil, save work, organize closer coöperation, all for one thing. Victory of world proletariat."

And after two hours he left me exhausted on the after-hatch, while he went to dress an ulcer on Dunya's hand.

I was again approached, this time by a tiny individual, who had the face of a Jew and wore the jersey of a seaman in the French navy, an affair with narrow blue and white stripes horizontally on the cotton fabric. He bowed and smiled.

"*Salut!*" he said. "I am told you speak French. I am French."

"Indeed!" I said.

He sat down beside me, lit a cigarette and began to talk without further invitation. Now I was subjected to a different type of Bolshevik, an assimilation from abroad. This fellow was undoubtedly European, a Parisian Jew, with all the pertness of the gamin, intelligent, quick, alert, subtle, amusing, cunning in conversation, a rascal. In the Soviet Union, he said, I would find a great deal that was good and a great deal that was bad. It was true that the condition of the working class, particularly on this ship, was good as regards working hours, labor laws and food, but it was bad in other respects. There was so much envy, so much jealousy, so much spying and intrigue and tittle-tattle, that life was sordid. Then this hatred of joy, of music, of love, of the dance, of drinking. What do people want? To turn the world into a Scotch Sunday?

He spoke like a counter-revolutionary, yet I knew he was not one. Neither was he an agent to sound me, but just one of these born gossips, who love to curry favor with the multitude by giving voice to whatever is likely to please or to be interesting.

The little wretch leaned close to me and said:

"My father was manager of the Europa Hotel at Leningrad. He had also an apartment which was coveted by Communist officials. In order to get the apartment, because apartments are difficult to

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get, they rigged up false accusations against him. They succeeded. All our family were punished with my father. I had to walk the streets for six months. Then the captain got me this job. It is better than hunger. The captain is a good man. He also protects me against those who grumble against the presence of Josef, that is my name, the son of the intriguer.

"I was a wireless operator. Now I am an oiler. In spite of injustice, I remain true to my class. I have fought in the Red navy. I would again fight in the Red navy. But, my friend, it is difficult to put up with the envy and intrigue that is everywhere."

After dinner I again talked to the captain. He now told me about his life. He, like little Josef the Parisian Jew, had also suffered. But the sufferings of the captain were terrible and they had left black scars on the soul of the captain, who was eaten with an implacable hatred of his enemies, the bourgeoisie. I have never met anything so cold and so terrible as the hatred of the captain for the bourgeoisie. He whom everybody on board praised and loved for his gentle kindness, was a wild beast when he thought or spoke of the bourgeoisie, that intangible monster with a million heads. So does the Christian monk hate that other intangible monster, the devil. So did the early Christians hate those monsters, the Pagans.

Born of parents who were serfs, he became a revolutionary before he could read or write. He took part in the revolution of 1905, was imprisoned, escaped from Riga and went abroad, to travel around the world as a sailor and general laborer at all manner of work.

"I was then a member of the Social Revolutionary party," he said, "and afterwards a member of the Industrial Workers of the World."

He apologized for himself when he spoke of his past political affiliations. It was just as if an early Christian admitted having once been a Pharisee. He told me of revolutionary activities in America and Australia, how he had been put in jail and tortured in those countries, how he was also jailed and tortured in England; and then how he returned to Russia in order to continue the great work of liberating the toiling masses of the world.

Of the world? I began to doubt if he were still an international communist as he continued to talk. His hatred of foreign capitalists (for it was foreign capitalism especially that had persecuted him) had thrown him back on the broad bosom of mother Russia.

"Look," he cried, "at the English workers. They all want to dress like their masters. They all want to wear the same trousers as the Prince of Wales and to wear the same tie as the Duke of York. They are slaves. We Russians are different. All our great men have always tried to dress as simple peasants. This is the blouse that Leo Tolstoy wore. The great Lenin never bothered about his clothes. In the old days our students were all rebels and they dressed like workmen. The spirit of freedom is born in the Russian. People boast of their inventions and of their science and of their civilization and their culture and their art. But we can show them all these things in equal or even in greater proportion. No longer must Russia allow herself to be called the barbarian at the gates of Europe."

As he spoke he almost lashed himself into a state of frenzy, so that I could hear the ghoulish characters of Dostoyevsky thrusting themselves forward from between his teeth, the Karamazovs, the Idiots, the Devils and the strange creatures from the House of the Dead, wild and wonderful geniuses, ashamed of their barbaric ancestors, clawing greedily at all the beautiful philosophies of Europe, to use as tools for paring off their savage humps and warts.

Mad, mad! But it is only the mad who conquer worlds. This was the madness of Christ and of Mohammed, the madness of Alexander, who deified himself, the madness of Napoleon, who believed in the guiding star of his destiny. Conquest is to the mad and defeat is for us, who linger by the stagnant pools of reason.

Suddenly he rose up before me, unwinding his long body until he reached his full height. Smiling on me, as gently as the Christly Prince in "The Idiot" might smile, he said in a pathetic voice:

"I have two parrots in my home at Leningrad. The comrades ask me why I develop bourgeois habits, by buying such toys as parrots. I tell them that parrots live for hundreds of years. My parrots are now young. Perhaps they will see Communism. I will never see Communism. But as long as I live I will make war on the bloody bourgeois. My children are growing up. They, too, will carry on the war against the bloody bourgeois. Now I go to the meeting of our Soviet."

At that moment the doctor entered the room to say the captain was wanted at the meeting of the Soviet.

"You come also," he said to me.

I followed them. The night was dark on deck. The sea loomed up, hurriedly rushing past the sides of the floundering ship, in a mysterious fashion. We moved aft. Presently a light gleamed from an open doorway and I heard heated voices arguing. It was the meeting of the Soviet. I felt a thrill. At once it occurred to me that this perfectly legitimate meeting of the Soviet reminded the captain of the old days, when he held exciting and illegal meetings in cellars and in caves, with scouts and all the awe-inspiring paraphernalia of conspiracy. Then, as now, he was plotting war against the bourgeoisie. Then he was powerless to act, except in a crude and violent fashion. Now he was master of a powerful unit of warfare, a whole ship's crew and a ship, sailing the open seas, with his flag strung proudly at his mast. How delighted he must be with himself, I thought.

I entered the room with them and sat on a form

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near the door. Then, indeed, I too felt awed. I do not know why, but even now, months later, I can recall the terrific spiritual and emotional reaction to that sight, all those seamen gathered together under the portrait of Lenin, arguing about the governance of their ship. The doctor tried to interpret what they were saying, but I paid no attention to him. One after the other they got up and shouted and perorated and shook their fists at one another, with the same force and enthusiasm one finds among the characters of an Elizabethan drama; the same violence of gesture, the same crazy sincerity, the same extravagance of emotion. The meeting summed up and contained all that I had seen on board the ship, all that I felt of mystery and of power in Bolshevism. I tried to ridicule it, to tell myself that they were playing at being a Soviet, at running the ship in common. But the atmosphere swept aside reason and ridicule. It was overpowering, like the sudden awe that overcomes a man in a lonely cave at night and forces him to run flying before spooks.

Only with the difference, that I wanted to jump up and cry out I was a Bolshevik. I trembled on my form and did not rise.

Presently I crept out into the night and leaned over the ship's side, listening to the rolling sea. I could still hear their voices raised in argument, the words Soviet, Socialist, Industry, Bourgeois, Proletariat, rushing out at me. But, above all, the savage energy in the voices, the triumphant outburst of force; while the ship sailed and the gloom of night about the meeting place made sinister their strange conference.

Somewhere on the ship a man was playing a balalaika, a wailing tune that rose and fell like the steppe. That is where they come from.

LIAM O'FLAHERTY.

Exile's Return

AFTER their years in Europe, the exiles of the arts came lingering homewards, came straggling half hopefully, half regretfully from their long vacations in Paris, Rome, Normandy or the Tyrol, at Oxford or on the Riviera. They had gone abroad at a moment of crisis and monetary disorganization when, living cheaply on American currency, they lived like noblemen; at a moment, too, when it seemed that America had qualities of freshness, confidence and vigor to offer the intellectual world of Europe. The humility of earlier exiles like Henry James, the air of patronage toward American letters adopted by Ezra Pound, were attitudes they did not understand. Taking things for granted, they were themselves taken for granted by Europeans of their own professions. They enjoyed themselves, acquired new theories of writing or painting, and wrote enthusiastic letters to their friends, who followed them abroad.

For some years after the War, it seemed that Paris was about to become the intellectual capital of the United States, but those years passed quickly. The exiles, most of them, had no intention of becoming expatriates. Financially they depended on America for the incomes that kept them temporarily in Europe. Intellectually, too, they depended on American life for their subject matter; sooner or later they had to revisit their sources. And so, their minds well stored, their pockets empty, they came sailing in second or third-class cabins, even steerage, toward the city where their future lay.

Their return, the ambitions they carried with them, the defeat of these ambitions, their slow readjustment—all this chapter of literary history is the subject of the five articles that follow. Having my choice of treatment, I shall write in the first person; after all, I was one of the returning exiles. And I shall describe my own experiences, partly because they seem interesting in themselves, partly because they suggest the adventures of other writers, young men and women of my own age lately returned from their apprentice years abroad. The problems we faced must still be faced by our successors: I hope they arrive at more profitable solutions.

Early in August, 1923, just before my twenty-fifth birthday, I landed in New York, after a sultry night in the Lower Bay, spent drinking the last of the prunelle which Ramon Guthrie had carried with him from his brother-in-law's farm in Lorraine. Nobody met us at the dock; I didn't know even where to send our trunks, and was much too poor to stay at a hotel. While the customs man was hastily glancing through our baggage—it hadn't the look of containing anything subject to duty—I made several telephone calls, as a result of which our problems were solved for the moment. Our two trunks would go to the house of a friend far downtown, almost in the shadow of the Woolworth Building. We ourselves would spend the morning at the apartment of Matthew Josephson, then editor of Broom. We took a taxicab down Fourteenth Street, passing a row of wholesale meat markets, in front of which a few newspapers fluttered in the weak breeze, passing the Elevated station at Ninth Avenue, with its look of being a Chinese pagoda,

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passing two rows of high brownstone houses, and the Convent of Our Lady of Guadelupe, marked only by a cross, and the Fourteenth Street Armory, and turning south on Sixth Avenue under the El pillars. Everything was strange to me: the enervating heat first of all, and the colors of the houses, and the straight vistas, and the girls on the streets in their bright dresses, and the lack of anything green to break the monotony of the square streets, the brick, concrete and iron. The next year—the next three years, in fact—would be spent in readjusting myself to this once familiar environment.

Looking back at the early autumn of my return, I cannot help feeling that most of my decisions, though made for the highest moral reasons, were ill suited to the circumstances and costly in their results. I had, for example, the choice that must be made by almost all apprentice writers, between free-lance authorship and working in an office. In the first case, I should be living by my own profession, yet everything I wrote would inevitably be molded by the need for carrying it to market. In the second case, four-fifths of my time would be wasted, yet the remaining fifth could be devoted to writing for its own sake, to the disinterested practice of the art of letters. This was my justification for taking a job—this and the fact that a job was offered me. Not until two years later did I realize that when one's writing ceases to have a functional relationship to one's life, when it becomes a way of spending otherwise idle evenings, it loses part of its substance. At best it has an unreality which can usually be recognized, an after-hours atmosphere of rhetoric, fantasy and gesture to be explained by the situation which produced it: the writer is seeking compensation for the qualities missing in his business career. More often there are no idle evenings; writing disappears from his life, giving way to the unhealthy feeling that he is better than his vocation, by which he is *frustrated,* from which he must violently *escape* to write a novel, a drama, an epic. But the fear persists that the book would be a failure: isn't it better to be paid each Saturday and talk drunkenly each Saturday night about the unwritten novel? . . .

I avoided this mood by falling into a different error, one almost as fatal: I assumed too many obligations. My job, for the first month at least, meant working nine or ten hours a day under pressure; but this was only the beginning of my duties. In addition to being proofreader, copywriter and general utility man for Sweet's Architectural Catalogue, I also became an associate editor of Broom, a position without pay or honor which involved reading manuscripts and proof, writing letters—and articles, too, when I had an hour to spare—pacifying subscribers, insulting contributors and raising money. With my wife I tried to redecorate our flat in Dominick Street, the most battered and primitive lodging to be found in New York. I attended literary teas that lasted all night. I composed an open letter to the Postmaster General and another to the editor of The Dial, both very insolent in tone. I engaged in more literary controversies than I can now remember. I wrote book reviews for Dr. Canby and poems for nobody in particular. I intrigued for a higher salary. Meanwhile, with Josephson, Guthrie and a few others, I tried to reproduce in New York the conditions which had seemed so congenial to us abroad—while praising in the same breath the picturesque American qualities of the machine age and the New Economic Era.

Reading the letters I wrote that year, and the entries in my notebook, I feel that everything I learned in France, the whole course of my thinking, had prepared me for an uncomfortable season of readjustment. On the fifth of July, in my last letter from Normandy, I told Kenneth Burke: "The famous two years are ending with little accomplished and much learned. Yet it seems to me that their great value was not so much the knowledge of books and writing they helped me to acquire as the aid they gave me in reaching a personal philosophy." I was using a big word. My philosophy was really an attitude, or at best a collection of beliefs, some personal, some borrowed, some definitely proclaimed, some almost unconscious, and all of them together forming a dubious basis for my actions during the months that followed.

I believed, first of all, that the only respectable ambition for a man of letters was to be a man of letters—not exclusively a novelist, an essayist, a dramatist, but rather one who adopts the whole of literature as his province, "who devotes himself to literature," I wrote with fervor, "as one might devote a life to God or the Poor."

I believed that the man of letters, while retaining his particular point of view, which was primarily that of the poet, should concern himself with every department of human activity, including science, sociology and revolution.

I believed that more writers were ruined by early success than by the lack of it, and was therefore willing to make a fool of myself in order to avoid being successful.

I was violently opposed to what I called "the fallacy of contraction." "Writers," I observed in my notebook, "often speak of 'saving their energy,' as if each man were given a nickel's worth of it, which he is at liberty to spend—one cent on Love, one cent on Livelihood, two cents on Art or other wasteful activities, and the remainder on a big red apple. . . . To me, the mind of a poet resembles Fortunatus' purse: the more spent, the more it supplies.

"There are many writers who deliberately contract the circle of their interests. They refuse to

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participate in the public life of their time, or even in the discussion of social questions. They avoid general ideas, are 'bored' by this, 'not concerned' with that. They confine themselves to literary matters—in the end, to literary gossip. And they neglect the work of expanding the human mind to its extremest limits of thought and feeling —which, as I take it, is the aim of literature."

I was grandiloquent in those days; I was also highly moral, but in a fashion acquired from my literary friends in Paris. A writer could steal, murder, drink or be sober, lie to his friends or with their wives: all this, I said, was none of my concern; but my tolerance did not extend to his writing. Here I demanded high courage, absolute integrity, and a sort of intelligence which was in itself a moral quality. Moreover, since art and its subject matter have a curious interaction, I was beginning to extend the same sort of judgments to life itself, praising an artist's career for qualities I admired in books—for being original, arbitrary, surprising, romantic. . . .

The last word is revealing. I myself, after a period of admiring classicism, had become in the strictest sense a romantic, one who read and admired the writers of the romantic era from Monk Lewis and Byron to Gérard de Nerval and Pétrus Borel. At the same time I was interested in applying their methods to new material drawn from the age of technology and high-pressure selling. I was determined to be humorless, having developed a furious contempt for "those beaten people who regard their own weakness with a deprecatory smile." And I had catchwords which reappeared in everything I wrote: "disinterestedness," "indiscretion" (I considered it a high virtue), "disdain," "significant" or "arbitrary gestures," "violence," "manifestoes," "courage."

My letters were filled with impractical projects:

"Yesterday, Kenneth," I wrote on June 29, "it struck me with the force of revelation that the time has come for us to write some political manifestoes. We are not critics or short-story writers; we are poets: in other words, we are interested in every form of human activity. To be ticketed and dismissed as such-and-such sort of a writer gives me a pain behind the ears. Also, I am eaten with the desire to do something significant and indiscreet. An Open Letter to President Harding. An Open Letter to the Postmaster General on the Censorship, in which I admit the right to censor, point out how dangerous my opinions are, even in book reviews, and demand why I am not suppressed. And other manifestations: for example, a call to voters to cease voting, an attack on the liberals, an attack on the Socialists and Communists. Imagine all these documents appearing together in a political issue of Broom. What a stink. But the stink would mean something. In a country as hypocritical as the United States, merely to enumerate the number of laws one has broken would be a significant gesture. And if all the literary forces of law and order rose up against us, we could always retire to farming or reading proofs. Think it over. The step is not to be taken tomorrow. And I have the feeling, Kenneth, that some such courageous and indiscreet step is required of us, if we are not going to resign ourselves to petty literary wars with Ezra Pound, Robert McAlmon, even Floyd Dell."

And so I was planning to carry literary ideals into the political world; I was contemplating a crusade and was prepared to be one of the leaders. But I was also a disciple: for the first and last time in my life I admitted to having a master.

"I have been intending to write you a letter about Louis Aragon," I said on June 4, "for his is a character which demands a long explanation. . . . Imagine this elegant young man, from a family whose social position is above reproach: a young man so gifted that the word 'genius' must have been applied to him ever since he was four years old and wrote his first novel. A brilliant career stretches in front of him. He has read everything and mastered it. Suddenly, at a given age, he rejects his family and social connections and, with a splendid disdain acquired from his early successes, begins to tell everybody exactly what he thinks. And he continues to be successful. He has so much charm, when he wishes to use it, that it takes him years to make an enemy; but by force of repeated insults he succeeds in this aim also. He retains all that hatred of compromise which is the attribute of youth—and of a type of youth we never wholly possessed. He disapproves of La Nouvelle Revue Française; therefore he refuses to write for it, although all other channels of publication are closed to him already.

"He lives literature. If I told him that a certain poem of Baudelaire's was badly written, he would be capable of slapping my face. He judges a writer largely by his moral qualities, such as courage, vigor of feeling, the refusal to compromise. He proclaims himself a romantic. In practice this means that his attitude toward women is abominable: he is either reciting poetry, which soon ceases to interest them, or trying to sleep with them, which becomes equally monotonous. He is always seriously in love; he never philanders. Often he is a terrible bore. He is an egoist and vain, but faithful to his friends. . . . I have met other people whose work is interesting, but Aragon is the only one to impose himself by force of character. I ought to add that he has a doglike affection for André Breton.

"My apologies for this long digression, but I think it will explain a good deal . . . for I admit that Aragon has had a great influence on me, which I have tried to keep in the moral sphere." I meant specifically that I was trying to keep him out of my poems. In this attempt I was partially unsuccessful, for his influence was stronger than

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I recognized at the time—stronger because the ideals he imposed on me were not merely his own, but those of a literary school, which had set itself the task of acting as the conscience of a generation of French writers.

The source of its standards lay, I think, in Rimbaud, but not so much in his works as in his life. At the age of nineteen, after producing some of the most interesting and, from the standpoint of literary history, the most fruitful poems in the French language, he had forsaken writing for adventure. This defection never ceased to worry his admirers—and what young French writer was not his admirer in the years that followed the War? How could they justify themselves for continuing to be men of letters when Rimbaud, with all his genius, had preferred a career of action? An obvious answer was to combine the two elements, by making literature an active and adventurous career, by exploring the possibilities of words and images as Rimbaud had explored the coasts of the Red Sea. . . . Such was the general attitude which, through Breton and Aragon, had reached me at third hand.

Breton and Aragon were rebels by conviction: they had been leaders of the Dadaists, whose movement was dribbling away in quarrels; they were about to become the founders of Surrealism. Their attitude toward the career of letters was too extreme to be popular among French writers, but it was understood and even respected. I was then convinced of its truth; even today I feel that it was a valid reaction to the situation existing in France. It produced exciting careers, and helped to produce many interesting works of art. The question was whether it would bear transplanting to another country.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

In his second article, "Significant Gesture," Mr. Cowley will tell how he got himself arrested for carrying these esthetico-moral principles into action and, more specifically, for punching a café proprietor in the jaw.—THE EDITORS.

Washington Notes

Suspicious Quiet on the Wet Front—The Gathering Beer Drive—Will Hoover Weaken?

AMONG the most interesting efforts of the coming Congress will be the one to reëstablish prohibition as the paramount issue before the public. Submerged by the moratorium plan and unemployment distress, Wet leaders generally have been somewhat discouraged at what has seemed to be a great diminution of popular interest in the fight for repeal or revision of the Eighteenth Amendment. Following the 1930 election, in which the Wets gained such extraordinary and significant victories in Ohio, Massachusetts, Illinois and other states, the tide against prohibition was running so strongly that a great many uninformed people were convinced the break had come and expected the short session at least to legalize the return of beer and light wines. I pointed out the extent of this misconception at the time and commented upon the fact that in the Seventy-second Congress, despite Wet gains, the Drys still held a clear majority in both House and Senate. Plainly the real hope of the Wets is in the 1932 election.

However, the more practical Wets, fully aware of the situation, were enormously encouraged at the increase in sentiment and felt that victory was in sight. Some of them believed that if the 1932 election could be won on the prohibition issue, a stampede toward the Wet side would follow and affirmative action, forced by public feeling, come before there was any reason normally to look for it—for instance, in the final session of the Seventy-second Congress.

Such was the general notion in Wet centers up to about two months ago. It was then that foreign affairs took the center of the stage and the pressure of economic conditions drove almost everything else out of the public mind. People have not, of course, changed their views on prohibition, but the difficulties of making a living have for the time being diverted their attention and cooled their ardor for repeal. The wiser among the Wet managers have recognized the facts and, after one or two attempts to force things, concluded it was better to let nature take its course. Consequently, there has not been more than an occasional blast from the Wet side for a good many weeks. The professional Drys have fired one or two broadsides at the Roosevelt candidacy, but they have failed to arouse either interest or response. Not one of the Democratic presidential aspirants has so much as mentioned the subject in months. In their speeches and statements they carefully steer away from prohibition as something that should not be referred to as even existing. This tendency to ignore the Eighteenth Amendment is also evidenced by certain Senators who were successful at the polls last year largely, if not entirely, because of their campaign declarations against it and their promises if elected to devote their energies wholly to the effort to knock it out.

The politician's tendency to forget prohibition has, in fact, gone considerably farther than either the critical nature of the European situation or the domestic slump in business justifies, and those who have studied it most carefully believe there will be a revival of the popular interest before long. The present Wet plan is to start this revival with a drive in the next session for legalized beer and light wines, and they count upon arousing a popular sentiment stronger than ever before. As they outline their plans to me, there seems sound ground for believing real progress may be made.

The idea, I am told, is to make the depression, the deficit and unemployment the basis for a showdown fight early in the session. This, it is contended, can be done in such a way as to subject prohibition to its severest test and force the Dry opposition into an utterly indefensible and extremely painful position. The anti-prohibition leaders expect to get greater coöperation from the Wets on this beer-and-wine drive than ever before. They propose to sidetrack all individualism, which in the past has rather detracted from the strength of the cause, and center every

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Wet agency, newspaper, organization and individual upon the beer-and-wine proposal. Further—and this, I think, is the chief point—the main argument for the legalization of beer and wine will be the economic one. It will be stressed. It will be played clear across the board. Figures and facts that cannot be assailed are now being assembled to prove that the restoration of beer and wine will provide employment for many men and women now out of work, replenish the depleted revenues of the Treasury, solve the problems of the harassed grape-and-grain market and generally stimulate industry and relieve distress.

It does seem to me that, launched on this basis, the drive will have a tremendous popular appeal. It will, if managed rightly, be largely free from the usual anti-prohibition arguments and have a timeliness and force which have been absent in the past. In addition it will have the strong support of organized labor. As a matter of fact, it is planned to let the labor leaders go to the front in the fight, stressing the relief the proposed legislation would be to the unemployed and urging it, not on the usual personal-liberty grounds, but as a greatly needed economic measure. A very strong statistical case will be made to buttress this contention, and those most active in forming the early Wet strategy are convinced they will muster a strength far in excess of that shown in Congress on any previous Wet proposal. Further, a great deal of pressure is to be applied to Mr. Hoover. The appeal to him will be solely on economic grounds. The figures and statistical analysis of what legalized beer and wines would mean in revenue, employment, industrial and agricultural stimulation are to be put before him in such a way that they cannot be dismissed, evaded or passed on to some Under-secretary or subordinate to answer, as were the Roosevelt and Pinchot letters.

In the meantime, despite White House denials through the faithful Joslin, the report persists that Mr. Hoover himself intended issuing a statement favoring the legalization as a means of hastening economic recovery. Twice recently it has been so widely believed as favorably to affect the stock market. What, if any, foundation there is for the report I do not know. What I do firmly believe, however, is that if there were no campaign on, if he were not a candidate for reëlection and if there were no Dry forces to be placated, the proposal would find instant and cordial approval from Mr. Herbert Hoover, who never was a prohibitionist, who does not by any means think prohibition a blessing, and who, as Senator Glass and others have repeatedly pointed out, has not yet said a single public word to justify anyone in believing that he believes in prohibition. In spite of that and in spite of his Wickersham Commission's report, which revealed more vividly than has before been done the evils that have followed in the wake of the Amendment, we find Mr. Hoover on the Dry side, forcing his party to that side, preparing to run for reëlection as a Dry candidate. It is a great pity he cannot be candid and courageous in this matter. It would be a fine thing if, disregarding politics, he could meet the appeal that will be made to him by the leaders in the beer-and-light-wine drive next winter with his mathematical and not his political mind. Furthermore, it might be the best sort of politics.

Washington. T. R. B.

The Quick and the Dead

Ladies of Creation, by Gladys Unger. Cort Theatre, September 8, 1931.

The Man on Stilts, by Edwin L. and Albert Barker. Plymouth Theatre, September 9, 1931.

THE TITLE of Miss Unger's play is perhaps not the happiest; but at least it means to express that side of the dramatic sex struggle that involves women who are, in this modern world, making their own way, their own careers, paying as they go. And perhaps the first few moments—two minutes, say, which is a long time on the stage—are an unfortunate introduction. The impression given is slightly amiable and amateur, whereas the play is really on another plane, with a real bottom, a real gift of invention, and highly diverting as well. The scenes are often delicious comedy in fact; though I am not sure it has ever occurred to Miss Unger, so modest and unforced is her method, that she has one of the most genuine social-comedy talents of our stage. These introductory moments in "Ladies of Creation" you might easily by now find changed; what was needed was only the work of ten minutes, a mere deleting of whatever might give the impression of wisecracking, and leaving what gave the flavor and natural progress of the play's conditions and location in the lady decorator's shop. The chief trouble of the opening moments was in fact Miss Paula Trueman and her forcing methods.

Miss Trueman, indeed, is the only bad casting in the production. She does not really create the character in relation to the play and to the other persons surrounding the humble little assistant in Miss Vanderlyn's smart shop. She cannot be said really to act in the play. What she does is numbers, every scene of hers is a number, not a part of a dramatic ensemble and story. And while we are on the subject, we may as well note her bad effect on the last scene, where the little girl returns as a movie wife. Miss Trueman turns her entrance again into a number, and by a sort of guying of the role takes out all its charm and meaning and wants the sweetness and sentiment intended by the author and needed by the comedy. A good part and a good theme are thus thrown away. What a strange place the stage is, and nobody ever quite knows why this or that happens on it!

In her problem for the play, Miss Unger has got hold of a modern enough theme: the struggle of the man with his career and his love, against the woman with her love and her career. In history there have been numberless heiresses to marry, et cetera, but never before our own day have there been young ladies, society buds, chambermaids, waitresses, as the case may be, who make thousands of dollars a month. And never before have there been women with business careers of such magnitude as must bring with them a reluctance to clash with the demands of being a wife. Being a husband, for the man, and for the woman, being a wife, are questions equally grave, equally sacrificial, so far as the heroine and the hero of "Ladies of Creation" are concerned.

The story begins in the shop of Miss Vanderlyn, New York's most exclusive decorator. We see the rival assistants, Mr. Dinkle and Sam; we note that Sam, self-made

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and still at the least unpolished, is the solid trunk from which this devious business of decoration springs into blossom. Sam's self-respect is upset; Miss Vanderlyn makes great use of him, and gets many of her results through mere canny sex. An old love of hers returns, their affair reawakens and progresses swiftly. They are on the point of her going off with him on his business trip to New Orleans when the wife turns up. Not able to be at home for Christmas, the husband has sent her a fat check, and this she has decided to spend on a surprise for him, redecorating the house. His old love of the white lilacs and the moon has been deceived by this husband, who has assured her of his wife's frigidity and distance; but the wife's account now clears that illusion away. There comes then one of the inventions of the play: the decorator accepts the commission to redecorate this wife's house; there will be red, there will be white lilacs, there will be a bedroom indeed. The whole motivation here is miles above most of our comic invention.

In the face of this flagrant romance and by way of assuaging his pride, Sam quits. Finally, however, the engagement for decorating the first of a chain of huge hotels full of homelike touches proves too much for Miss Vanderlyn single-handed as it were—Mr. Dinkle is a busy blank—and Sam is begged to return. He has been secretly watching the progress of affairs at the hotel and is thus ready to help his former friend. As for returning, that is another matter. In the struggle between the two, some of the old motives of our grandmothers' drama are reversed: Sam will not be had save as a husband, and in the end love wins the lady plus a lot of brackets for the hotel, kept by Sam in reserve for this very moment. No forfeit, therefore, will be forthcoming, the first of the chain hotels will open on the day announced, carpets, visiting Governor, special trains, florals and all. As a nation, we have kept our self-respect.

By way of dramatic image—images that symbolize and put into living dramatic form some thesis of the play—Miss Unger has two or three of the best I have seen in a long time. One is where the little salesgirl, having caught the lover of the great movie star Idora Day, regrets treating her idol in such a fashion, a sort of heavenly-and-earthly-love motif; another is where this same girl—when her lover, coming to carry her off, shows her a license for which he had inadvertently given her name instead of the intended Idora's—says, examining the license, she's sure if he will be quick he can exchange it; a whole pitiful lifetime of desiring, following the rules, giving up what she most wants, is thereby both comically and pathetically expressed. There are a number of these images created or discovered through the play. The scene of the two women, the movie baby star and the sophisticated career woman, when their lovers are ravished from them and they are left with a bottle to solace each other, is one of the best I know of in several seasons of plays. Some of the comedy in its final scene, where the struggle resolves itself into finality, conventionality, despair and devotion, has, I hope, discovered by now the rearrangement that was needed; the parts of the scene needed not to be corrected, but rearranged, in order to achieve the final and decisive emphasis.

The furniture and fittings of the clever scenes, one room in three moods (autobiographical with the decorator herself, as life visits her) are from Frankl, and are very smart and right for the play; the scenes themselves have been built with a rare and expert tidiness at the Throckmorton studios. Mr. George Somnes—just swallowed up by Paramount in Hollywood—has directed the play admirably, though sometimes a little less of mere stage movement and something more of homely American realism would help. Miss Chrystal Herne, never stupid in any role, played the decorator with a sharp, varied authority. If some of her scenes need more emphasis on the essential themes along which they progress, the performance as a whole is, nevertheless, excellent. Miss Dorothy Mackaye, except for an exit or so that was too obvious and too stagewise, and an occasional insistence on being funny in scenes that would have been funnier taken seriously as the dramatist intended, gave a corking performance all through, much applauded. Save for Miss Trueman, who should have been for this role a gentler, simpler and more disarming type and a player with a less marked method, the whole piece is unusually well cast. In the company is included one player who appears for the first time on Broadway and ought to be a find, a fixture there for seasons to come. This is Mr. Fred Stewart, a young actor well trained already in Stuart Walker's Cincinnati company, and a real stage character comic. He has good movement, good transitions in the scene; he is convincing, inventive and witty. In a hundred parts he could even now be delightfully predicted.

Burst with Liberty

You are not long, watching the newest play produced by Mr. Arthur Hopkins, in asking yourself this question: why, if one is going to trouble to do such a play, does one not trouble to do it?

"The Man on Stilts" is a sort of full-length burlesque, with a theme not unlike that in Lady Gregory's short piece of "Hyacinth Halvey," where, as everyone knows, the hero, having been presented with a reputation in a flowery letter of recommendation, rises higher and higher; and, whatever he may do, is forever unable to lose his glorious halo. In this play with which the Plymouth now opens its season, we have a young man who, having met up with a drunken newspaper reporter, and aided also by the contrivings of Senator Tarbotton, has become a national hero. He is the first man to cross the continent on a road roller; the cause promoted is All for Better Roads! He has a girl who worships heroes, as the public does. In spite of the young man, who is eternally plagued and sickened with reporters and politicians, with vaudeville, radio, film managers, telephones and whatnot, the reputation continues. He belongs to the people; and after one long desperate effort disclaiming the whole faked glory that has been heaped upon him, he collapses at last into his sweetheart's and his public's arms.

The play is full of irony, satire, backstage politics, the popular scene in our America. Done as swift and biting farce, shortened or enlivened with variety or expertness, it might, weak as it is, amuse and entertain. It stands now as an excellent example of futility and an instance of directing where, as Plato said of democracy, we have a charming state in which everybody does as he wants, the

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pupil is as good as the master, the ass as good as the rider, indeed everything is ready to burst with liberty. There is no emphasis, no variety in scene layout; everybody gets on and off as his genius dictates. As for acting, Mr. Harry Ellerbe, trained, like the Mr. Stewart above, in the Walker Cincinnati company, has some technique, and is, moreover, one of those young actors with a certain stage naturalness and harmless mannerism; and Miss Eda Heinemann has no little vim and stage sense. Otherwise, what we see at the Plymouth can only be said to be, for those who know something already of the theory of acting, a good illustration of what acting is not; for those who are in a muddle about this subject, it is, with its casualness in every technical respect, even make-up, a very harmful influence. How astonishing it is that so many people as we see packing the Plymouth stage could be interested in exhibiting to us nothing beyond their own uninteresting selves, glimpsed often for a moment only, in some unstudied and muffed scene!

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

From a Harlan Jail

SIR: Another shadow has fallen over Harlan, another outrage; will they never cease? Are the coal operators' thugs going to continue on their bloody warpath of jailing, shooting, dynamiting and murder?

Today we learned that another National Miners' Union relief kitchen had been raided last night. A notorious deputy sheriff in cold blood killed one miner and wounded two more, one of them fatally.

The deputy is already out on bond. But Harlan County jail is crowded to twice its capacity, with sixty miners' leaders behind these bars. Most of these miners are being framed on triple charges of murder growing out of strike struggles last May—with the prosecution demanding death in the electric chair. Twenty-one are charged with "banding and confederating," and face possible sentences of from one to fifteen years. And twelve of them are charged with criminal syndicalism, with conviction meaning a sentence of $10,000 fine and twenty-one years in the penitentiary. Scores more have been indicted on all of these charges and will be thrown in here as soon as they make their appearance. Each day brings new arrests and more ghastly terror.

The miners of Harlan County have chosen to keep up the struggle rather than see their children die of starvation. Jailing has not quelled the spirit of the union leaders who are behind the bars. They are making every sacrifice for the right to organize against misery and privation. Help them by keeping their wives and kids from utter starvation while they are in jail.

Your check sent to Grace Hutchins, treasurer of the Prisoners' Relief Fund, 80 East Eleventh Street, New York City, will be immediately forwarded here in full. Indicate that it is for the families of the Harlan prisoners. It is an urgent need. Don't fail us.

They have me in jail here facing twenty years along with the others. I am charged with criminal syndicalism because I brought relief and legal aid to the prisoners through the International Labor Defense.

JESSIE LONDON WAKEFIELD,
Secretary, Prisoners' Relief Fund.

Harlan County Jail, Harlan, Ky.

The Griffin Bill

SIR: Soon after the new Congress opens, Representative Anthony J. Griffin (New York) will reintroduce his bill to amend the naturalization act. The purpose of the Griffin Bill is to prevent refusal of citizenship to applicants who cannot conscientiously answer yes to the question:

"If necessary, are you willing to take up arms in defense of this country?"

This question was never authorized by Congress, but as it was not forbidden it has been held lawful by the Supreme Court. New legislation is, therefore, the only means of admitting to citizenship such desirable persons as Rosika Schwimmer, Professor Douglas Clyde Macintosh, Miss Marie Averil Bland and many others.

Although the continuance of the obnoxious question consolidates another extension of militarism in the United States, the issue here is not pacifism. Some friends of the Griffin Bill have suggested that it be redrafted to cover specifically the matter of bearing arms. I would relish any clear-cut fight for pacifism, including refusal of alternative service, but this is not the place—opposition to the state's use of violence hardly can be expressed adequately upon application for the so-called privileges conferred by the state.

The bill is worded:

> Except that no person mentally, morally and otherwise qualified shall be disbarred from citizenship by reason of his or her religious views or philosophical opinions with respect to the lawfulness of war as a means of settling international disputes.

The issue is thus one of freedom of thought, as Justice Holmes made clear in the Schwimmer case. Chairman Albert Johnson of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization got up on his patriotic hind legs at the hearing on the bill and vainly tried to make the proponents admit that they were sponsoring a subversive movement. Failing that, when he released the record for printing one full year after the hearing, he gave the Bill this distorted title: "To Permit Oath of Allegiance by Candidates for Citizenship to Be Made with Certain Reservations."

Representative Griffin was quick to inform newspaper editors that this title "is rather misleading and calculated to prejudice the American reader who looks at it for the first time." He will denounce this action on the floor of the House. He has promised also to call attention to the fact that Chairman Johnson continued the hearing for a second day, without notifying our side, to enable a Washington vigilante to get her licks in. We had no chance to refute her misstatements.

Under the national chairmanship of Mrs. Lola Maverick Lloyd of Winnetka, Illinois, our committee plans a vigorous struggle.

New York City. ALFRED LIEF.

For a Biography of Robert W. Chanler

SIR: I am preparing a biography of Robert W. Chanler. The story of this colorist in life and paint will be illuminated largely through the help and coöperation of his friends. Any letters—originals or copies—reminiscences or data will be immediately copied and promptly returned. I am especially anxious to receive descriptions and present ownership of his paintings.

Woodstock, N. Y. JOSEPH LAWREN.

The Wayward Press

SIR: The efforts of newspapers to keep the public in ignorance as to the extent and the cause of "hard times" give frequent smiles to the author of "The Brass Check." I often see contradictions on the same page and sometimes even in parallel columns. But I think this is the first time I have seen one in successive sentences. This is from an A. P. dispatch from New York, telling us the most important news, or falsehoods, of the day.

Pasadena, Calif. UPTON SINCLAIR.

[ENCLOSURE]

Recent charges in British Labor circles that American bankers have brought pressure to bear for a reduction of the "dole" have been emphatically denied.

In some of Wall Street's highest banking circles the economy program of the new coalition government and the bolstering of it by a large international loan are regarded as major steps toward lifting the world from the mire of depression.

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Novels as News

Susan Spray, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

The Colonel's Daughter, by Richard Aldington. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

All Passion Spent, by V. Sackville-West. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

NOVELS are really not much in anybody's life, except perhaps the author's; and even so successful an author as Somerset Maugham (who apparently takes a masochistic pleasure in uttering facts) has put the existence of the average novel at ninety days. Novels in themselves are not very important, to be sure, but they are perhaps as truly mirrors of their day as newspapers are. Newspapers, too, color the news, suppress it, exaggerate it, minimize it, are sometimes ignorant of it; sometimes beg the questions which they cannot answer. It may be heresy to say so, especially in the columns of a journal that comes out every week, rain or shine: but I believe Joyce's "Ulysses" covered the life of man for one 1904 summer's day as well and truly as any Dublin newspaper of even date.

The three novels to be considered here are not "Ulysseses" by a long shot, but they are fair samples of the news the novelists are telling us. All of them are primarily novels, not tracts: they are consequently readable even if you are not a Prohibitionist, a Communist, a Roman Catholic or an Open Conspirator; all are written with more than average ability. They are all English, and only one of the three is concerned with the social state of affairs.

Sheila Kaye-Smith long ago staked a claim for herself in Sussex, and she has been cultivating her garden there ever since. There are various reasons for gardening, but Candide's is perhaps not so very different from the suburbanite's: the world has been too much with both of them. Miss Kaye-Smith eludes the vexatious questions of her own day by simply disregarding them; the action of "Susan Spray" takes place two generations ago, in early Victorian times. If we were Communists we should doubtless call Miss Kaye-Smith a good example of the ostrich school; to which Miss Kaye-Smith might well retort that she never had any intention of being a journalist. The news she has chosen to report is of a kind not much affected by the passage of time or legislation. Her scene is rural England, her people poor or middling well-to-do farmers.

Susan, the eldest daughter of an overworked farm-hand, soon had so many brothers and sisters that she was sent out into the fields when she was five. It was before the repeal of the Corn Laws, and bread was scarcer than children. Once a sudden thunder storm frightened her into going home before she was supposed to; and in order to avoid a beating she said she had seen a vision. After she had testified to her experience in the next meeting of the Colgate Brethren, she was sure of it; and soon she found the gift of tongues added to her seeing eye. The Brethren were amazed at her preaching, and her fame spread. All through her life Susan found her only real happiness in the pulpit; and though she was three times married (the last time bigamously) she never allowed wifely duties to supersede her ministry. At the end you see her, having found an earthly angel to back her schemes, triumphantly inaugurating a sect of her own invention, with herself as its omnipotent Aimee Semple McPherson.

Sheila Kaye-Smith writes about her people with discernment, sympathy, sometimes with ironic detachment. She is no Thomas Hardy, but she does a good job. The general effect, however, is one of old-fashionedness: her news is news that men have heard before. And, like Housman and the oracle, you may think it sound good sense but it really doesn't help you very much. In this day and age, the Sheila Kaye-Smith kind of novel does actually seem curiously out of date. You need not go so far as to call her an ostrich, but you cannot help feeling she has missed the train.

The case of V. Sackville-West is a little different. She is a much clearer example of the self-conscious artist, of the school that owes allegiance to Virginia Woolf. Esthetically, she is better bred than Sheila Kaye-Smith, and it will be better bred of you to prefer her writing. As a story, "All Passion Spent" is slight, not to say improbable, but it is undoubtedly well written. And there is more to it than that. For, in this little fairy story about an old lady whom long awaited widowhood rescued from the weariness of being a great lady, the author actually succeeds in making you feel what it may be like to be old. If you are young, this is an obvious advantage, and you may be grateful to V. Sackville-West. The author has first rarefied her old lady into impossible serenity and then organized her rambling musings into an impossibly wise and beautiful retrospect; but this is perfectly justifiable conduct in an artist. The three old men who form a sort of hobbling chorus for Lady Slane's performance are even less recognizably human figures, but they do not spoil the show, they even add to it. The author is not so much concerned with her characters as with embroidering a theme: Old Age and the Vanity of Human Wishes. She succeeds in making the theme so haunting that you are able to disregard the not-always-successful puppetry of the figures who move to its measure.

There is a blooded quality about Miss Sackville-West's writing that nowadays even most English novels lack; if it were possible for a modern woman writer to be urbane, she might well be called so. But urbanity—whether or not you deprecate the fact—is not a contemporary virtue; ours is not a drawing-room age. It is no doubt occasionally a great treat to be allowed to peek in the window at such genuinely well bred functions as Miss Sackville-West's; but the fact remains that we are outside looking in.

There is nothing whatever urbane about Richard Aldington. Though "The Colonel's Daughter" is written from an attitude that attempts a kind of satirical detachment, the author's stance is more than a little shaky: he is like a man trembling with rage but determined to remember to keep his temper. Georgie, his unattractive heroine, is the only daughter of a stupid, impoverished retired army officer. She is condemned to grow up and spend her long spinsterhood in the same poky little village. England's man-power has been decimated by the War; England's Georgies are out of luck. Knavery, stupidity, corruption, are the order of the day; the War and its aftermath have done nothing but foster the growth of human weeds, and England's garden is choked with them. In an unnecessary epilogue Aldington is even more outspoken. "Britannia is a whore, and the Press is her pimp. . . . So far as this rainy little gem is concerned, things look serious." Richard Aldington is very much concerned with what is going on in England, but not from a political or an economic view. He has been moved to coherent hatred by what he considers a most unpleasant spectacle: English middle-class life, postwar. Aldington's account of it is convincing enough to

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make uncomfortable reading. But it is too much a pamphlet to be a first-rate novel.

Who, then, shall be saved? If these three books are really a fair sample of our modern novelists' wares, shall we not rate them in order of merit? No, let us take a tip from the publishers, who priced them all the same, and say that in such an open market as today's it is merely a matter of taste. What do you read—Times, Tribune, Graphic, Daily Worker?

T. S. MATTHEWS.

The Economics of Appomattox

King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America, by Frank Lawrence Owsley. University of Chicago Press. 617 pages. $5.

NOT SINCE Mr. Beard's "Economic Interpretation of the Constitution" has there appeared a more resounding contribution to the economic interpretation of American history than "King Cotton Diplomacy." Professor Owsley has here reëvaluated the diplomatic history of the Confederacy, and his conclusions are decidedly at variance with those of his predecessors, who have been accustomed to emphasize moral rather than economic factors. This is the more remarkable in that Professor Owsley's earlier volume, "State Rights in the Confederacy," (now republished) advanced a strictly political interpretation of the downfall of the Cotton Kingdom. The present study is essentially a continuation of the argument then advanced—a study of the external history of the Confederacy with a view to showing that neither the blockade nor diplomacy was responsible for defeat.

In the course of this argument many sacrosanct historical truisms are rudely discarded, and conclusions little short of revolutionary are advanced with a quiet audacity that is one of the rewards of scholarship. For over a generation historians have followed Charles Francis and Henry Adams in ascribing to the anti-slavery sentiment in England and to the Emancipation Proclamation a decisive influence in preventing recognition of the Confederacy; and one of the most precious of the amenities of Anglo-American relations is the memory of the sympathy of the Lancashire weavers for the Union. As recently as last spring, this position was reiterated, this memory revived, by Messrs. Jordan and Pratt, who brought forward additional supporting evidence. Mr. Owsley repudiates altogether the moral effect of abolition sentiment in England, and questions both the sincerity and the importance of the sympathy expressed by the British workingmen. It was, he argues, considerations of economy and of state, not of morals or of law, that dictated the decisions of the British Cabinet. That England did not intervene on behalf of the South was due not to sympathy with the cause of emancipation, or of democracy, not to fear of the United States or even to the threat of a wheat famine, but to crass materialistic considerations. The Civil War, contrary to tradition, brought wealth, not poverty, to England. The large cotton operators were making handsome profits, and the small ones didn't count. Linen and woolen manufacturers profited enormously; the munitions industry and shipbuilding were in an equally happy position. Blockade running brought fabulous returns. And finally, the American merchant marine, the only one that seriously threatened England's commercial supremacy, was ruined and largely transferred to Great Britain.

As for the importance of pro-Northern sentiment among the working classes, Professor Owsley dismisses this rather sharply. "The agitations and mass meetings held in England by William Forster and John Bright," he says, "and by other less radical Northern propagandists, and the vast multitudes who voted petitions to Parliament and Cabinet against intervention, have been taken too much at their face value, while similar agitations and mass meetings and giant petitions got up by James Spence . . . and other Southern propagandists have been too much ignored." And the workingman, he intimates, was purchasable, even as was the operator.

Even more striking are Professor Owsley's conclusions as to the effectiveness and the legal status of the blockade. He announces that this measure, so generally adduced as a capital cause for Northern success, was a total failure, and he supports this announcement with impressive documentary evidence. It was palpably impossible, he points out, for the quaint Federal navy of the early years of the war effectively to blockade 3,500 miles of coast line; and even to the end of the war the blockade was ineffective. It could be, and was, broken at will—though the will, it is important to remember, was not always present. Cotton a-plenty—after the disastrous embargo of the first year had been abandoned—was shipped out of the South; Owsley estimates that well over half the total crop of some two million bales was successfully exported, and the Confederate army was largely equipped by importations from abroad. Such towns as Charleston and Wilmington carried on a commerce much brisker during the war than in time of peace, and Owsley hazards a conservative estimate of eight thousand violations of the blockade during the entire war. Here was palpably a paper blockade, and one outlawed by the Declaration of Paris, to which both England and France as well as the Confederacy were subscribers. Yet all Europe chose to follow Great Britain in recognizing this blockade, and Great Britain recognized it because, as the leading maritime power, it served her interests to maintain a latitudinarian interpretation of maritime law; because, to put it brutally, she wished to establish precedents for the violation of the Declaration of Paris by which the United States would be bound. In this, as the World War showed, she was singularly successful. This same calculating reasoning dictated England's acquiescence in the Northern demand for the seizure of the Laird and Thompson rams—a story familiar to all readers of Henry Adams' "Education." Professor Owsley contends that the United States was legally wrong in this demand, and brings out the illuminating fact that these same rams, whose sale to the belligerent Confederacy would presumably constitute a violation of international law, were later sold to Denmark and Prussia during the war of '64. Professor Owsley goes so far as to regard the Geneva award of damages on the Alabama claims as a miscarriage of justice, and something in the nature of hush money. His arraignment of Lincoln, however, is unnecessarily severe. "To gain," he says, "a doubtful advantage he flew in the face of all American permanent interests . . . and international law was put back where it was in the days of the Orders in Council and the Milan decrees. Old Abe sold America's birthright for a mess of pottage." The advantage, by Owsley's own showing, was scarcely a doubtful one, and the maintenance of the Union cannot rightly be described as a mess of pottage.

It is perhaps misleading to dwell so insistently on the controversial character of Professor Owsley's volume, whose scope actually embraces the entire diplomatic history of the Confederacy. Nowhere can the student find a

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more thorough study of the Confederate relations with Mexico, England and France, of the activities of Mason, Slidell, Yancey, Mann, Hotze, De Leon, Pickett, Quintero and a host of other Confederate agents and propagandists, of the tortuous policy of Napoleon and the vacillation of the British Cabinet. Professor Owsley's massive volume not only challenges old beliefs and excites new controversies, but it supersedes all other studies of Confederate diplomacy by its thoroughness and its scholarship. Only its literary qualities leave something to be desired.

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER.

Religion of a Critic

The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse, by Evan Charteris. New York: Harper and Brothers. 524 pages. $5.

AT SEVENTY-FOUR Sir Edmund Gosse declared himself "the disciple of one man only—Sainte Beuve," and added further: "No one else has been my master." He had then for five years been delivering in The Times his Sunday "sermons," as he called his own *causeries:* they were to pour forth with unfailing regularity for four years longer, until his death in the spring of 1928. Perhaps no other position to crown the end of his days would have better fitted his desire. He had been awarded honorary degrees at Cambridge, given the librarianship of the House of Lords, acknowledged in various quarters as in some sort the literary counsellor and magistrate of all England. These were honors—yet not without alloy: he had lectured at Cambridge for the five years preceding 1890, but he was not himself a "university man"; despite his growing critical prestige, he could never forget that in 1886 an article in The Quarterly Review had attacked, and for a time undermined, the very foundations of his claim to literary scholarship; and, if he had been librarian to their lordships for all the decade before the World War, he was unable in 1914 to obtain an ardently desired extension of his term beyond the prescribed age of retirement at sixty-five. These disappointments gnawed the fine edge of his pride for long after they had been forgotten by everybody else. To become at last as accepted and weekly an institution as church—even as The Times itself—was a more than satisfactory climax to the career of one who had come to London at seventeen, less after the manner of Whittington than of any unanchored and even uneducated youth who had begun to write verses.

Four of those seventeen had been years of schooling, in which languages other than English figured more largely than native literature itself. The whole of his youth had been completely dominated by his father, by his father's researches among "birds and fishes and the smaller mammals," and by the same parent's evangelical fervor as member and preacher of the Plymouth Brotherhood. (His mother, who died when Edmund was seven, was, surprisingly, born of New England parents.) The elder Gosse, author himself of books on marine zoölogy, was twice commemorated in volumes by his son: a "Life," published in 1890, and, seventeen years later, the "study in two temperaments" called "Father and Son," which George Moore persuaded the son to write, and in the first person. The latter book Edmund Gosse looked upon as "a call to face the fact that the old faith is now impossible to sincere and intelligent minds." This much he had decided for himself more than a quarter-century earlier: he had not been ten years in London without refashioning his father's precepts into something perilously akin to the pagan pantheism of Swinburne, the idol of Gosse's young manhood. Perhaps it took him many years longer to formulate the corollary question: "What discipline can we substitute for the splendid metallic rigor of an earlier age?" This he could ask (he did not pretend to answer it) at fifty-eight; but there is no sign of such doubting when, at thirty-six, he wrote to R. L. Stevenson of the great goddess Literature: "To touch the skirts of this glory . . . is quite as much as religion!"

Gosse has been the chronicler of more than one literary period: in his youth he saw Swinburne plain, Browning, Morris and Tennyson; he was approximately contemporary with Hardy, Stevenson, George Moore, Henry James, and a faithful correspondent of them all; he lived to hail the rising fame of Gide, to see eye to eye with Squire, to read the manuscript of Sassoon's "Fox-Hunting Man" and advise the author: "Pull yourself together. . . . No satire and no sneering!" He yearned at sixty-seven to be "more daring, less reserved" in writing the definitive if "sickening" truth about Swinburne as lover and inebriate. At seventy-seven he begged Gide to tell him "what advantage to anyone can accrue from 'Si le Grain ne Meurt.'" In his last year of all, lines of Valéry brought tears to his eyes, and Chesterton's defense of Stevenson gave him "malicious and vindictive pleasure." Such responses to the written word—ready responses if not always to kindred stimuli—his letters show to the end. If they do not avoid pitfalls of prejudice, error, bad manners, occasional meanness of spirit, these unpleasantries prove only that he shared the common lot of literary folk. In the biographical passages, Mr. Charteris presents his man with infectious sympathy and an admirable clarity of vision. Here is an instructive (by no means a horrible) example out of the history of English literary criticism at more than one stage along the road from Arnold and Stephen to the scene of here and now.

HANSELL BAUGH.

The Folkways of Business

Economic Behavior, an Institutional Approach, by Willard E. Atkins, Donald W. McConnell, Corwin D. Edwards, Carl Raushenbush, Anton A. Friedrich and Louis S. Reed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 2 vols. 1079 pages. $8.50.

IT IS NO MEAN TASK to contrive an introduction to economics for the modern reader. In days of old a series of first principles, neatly articulated into a system, was easily made acceptable to minds in search of fundamentals. But the industrial system has proved itself too intricate, evasive and changing to be pent up within a collection of simple formulas. And an exposition which parades normalcy, natural law and a self-operating order no longer appears reasonable to persons who have ceased to think that way. It may still be real, or sound, or true, whatever those words mean; but, now as always, an explanation that does not explain is no explanation.

The orthodox system has many times over been reduced to simpler statement and more symmetrical form; it has been freighted with up-to-date information; it has been adorned with illustrations from everyday life; chapter on chapter has been added concerned with economic problems. But such excrescences have never been assimilated into the system and the fault-line between theory and practice has remained always visible. The historical account of how industrial society came to be what it is, has led to something very different from the body of doctrine which it

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was meant to introduce. The mere description of "the economic world" has fallen short of the how and why of industrial activity, and has failed to give the challenge and the vision without which interest was bound to perish.

The distinctive mark of the present work is the attempt to make economics at home with current sense and reason. The world of ideas that lies this side of Veblen, Cooley and Gilbert Lewis is not that of Newton and Hume, and to write understandable things Willard Atkins and his colleagues have had to present a different economics. In the pages of the book is to be discovered no economic order which through the efficacy of the law of demand and supply is an automatic self-regulating mechanism; instead there is in evidence the economic behavior of a multitude of real persons, acting within the limits imposed by their institutions, and helping to remake them. The space usually devoted to the laws of price, curves of demand and the norm of the competitive process is given to the processes of marketing, the uses of advertising, and actual competition at work. The imposing factors of production are crowded out of the volume by investors, managers, laborers and other groups, whose doing or leaving undone brings prosperity or depression. The inevitabilities of population, wages, living standards and whatnot are replaced by traditions, usages, conventions and the like, under the compulsions of which men must carry on, but which they have power to amend. Even the law of diminishing returns, the foundation of an economics of scarcity, gives way to the development of technology, which really creates resources and promises an economics of plenty. In all of it emphasis falls upon device and procedure, upon usage and agency, which make up so much as we possess of an organization for our industrial activities. The focus of the whole discussion is the folkways which constitute the business control of industry.

It is significant that the point of view is consistently maintained, that alien materials which cannot be assimilated are conspicuously absent. It is really remarkable that unity in purpose and integrity in statement have survived a multiple authorship. The book is good; but the quality of its excellence only time can tell. It is much too fresh in its approach to compete with the older manuals in march of argument and precision of statement; it is much too comprehensive to share with the better of specific studies their thorough analyses of particular institutions. It is adequately grounded in the monographs of a realistic economics; but its domain is broad, and their number is not legion, and into many engaging subjects it goes but a little way. Its very approach, an introduction to the tangled and colorful medley of economic institutions, commits it to being a first rather than a last word, to getting readers into the habit of raising questions rather than to answering them. The least interesting chapters of the book are well written and suggestive; the most engaging abound in contributions toward understanding. The commitment to inquiry and against dogma is a sentence of short life upon the book. In days gone by truth taken captive might survive in a standard manual for decades; today a venture into finding out is a challenge which must be outmoded by its very success.

But, however fleeting or lasting its value, it will serve the current cause well enough. It is not every volume upon so abstract a subject whose pages can without incongruity be adorned with pictures. But here are real men, real activities, a real grappling with the problem of the backwardness of our control over great industry. The book will have little meaning for those who regard the

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activities of business as natural phenomena, find in the operation of economic laws a self-corrective order, and can prove after the best manner of Euclid that continuing unemployment is a logical impossibility. Its appeal must be to readers who see the arrangements under which our industries are conducted as of human invention, regard the economic arts as subject to improvement, and find a challenge in the persisting paradox of inadequate livings and surplus productive capacity. The appeal of any explanation lies in the state of mind which it takes for granted; this engaging venture seems likely to live, until it is replaced by its better, in a climate of opinion which is beginning to prevail. WALTON H. HAMILTON.

Book Notes

PAMPHLETS AND REPRINTS

THE NEW RUSSIAN POLICY, a speech by Joseph V. Stalin. *Foreword by George S. Counts. New York: The John Day Company. 28 pages. $.25.*

Stalin's speech of June 23, 1931, in which he announced an important change in the industrial policy of the Soviet government, was extensively discussed in the American press, but no complete version of it has been available. Even the present text is not strictly authoritative, the publishers having assembled it from the columns of two different Soviet periodicals; but they believe it to be complete, and certainly it will prove serviceable to American readers interested in the progress of the Five Year Plan. . . . This pamphlet is the third of a series now being issued by the John Day Company, which believes that the craft of pamphleteering is revived in every period of social upheaval, and that the present times in particular "demand this swift and terse medium for expressing urgent ideas."

WAR AND PEACE, by Leo Tolstoy. *New York: The Modern Library. $1.*

"War and Peace" is the first volume in a new series called "The Modern Library Giants," which the publishers describe as "books that obviously belong in the Modern Library list, but whose texts are much too long for the usual format. The 'Giant' format has been designed to permit their publication in one compact volume, complete and unabridged." "War and Peace," for example, contains 1,146 large and closely printed pages. The stiff cloth binding is excellent, the paper cheap but opaque, the type clear and pleasing. Other volumes in the series, which is to include such longer classics as Boswell's "Johnson," will have from 1,000 to 1,200 or more pages. The publishers ask us whether we like this new idea. We like it.

SCIENCE

THE STORY OF SCIENCE, by David Dietz. *New York: J. H. Sears and Company. 387 pages. $3.50.*

A popular presentation of contemporary science. The author is at his best when dealing with concrete factual material, as in the outline of astronomy and geology. The treatment of physics, essentially a theoretical science, is slight, although a brief chapter on relativity is appended, without organic connection, to the section on "The Story of the Atom." The section on "The Story of Life" includes a chapter on "Mind" which is certain to be misleading to the popular reader and which could safely have been omitted in a book of this sort. On the whole, however, the book is ably and interestingly written.

BIOLOGY IN HUMAN AFFAIRS, edited by Edward M. East. *New York: Whittlesey House. 399 pages. $3.50.*

Readers of "Sin and Sex" will recall Robert Briffault's comments on the importance of biology in our so-called philosophies of value, social and cultural. The present symposium confirms and enlarges these comments. Each of the twelve contributors discusses, in a popular but competent way, one or another of the biological factors in civilization. In addition to contributing an introductory

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chapter on the necessity for more and better biological knowledge, the editor himself writes shrewdly on heredity. Chapters on medicine, physiology, public health, food resources and nutrition, educational and industrial psychology, the social sciences and zoölogy, all go to show that, of the innumerable things men have been interested in, Man is the most important, and the least known.

FICTION

ALBERT GROPE, by F. O. Mann. *New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.*

An earnest and plainly written story, ideal for readers who wish substantial fare that makes no demands on the intellect or the imagination. In a long and skillfully constructed volume, Mr. F. O. Mann exploits the life of a thoroughly self-made man, honest but weak, ambitious but timid. He rises from poverty, persecution and misery to a satisfactory affluence, flirting with passion on his way. There is humor and pathos here—the humor and pathos latent in the life of a British Caspar Milquetoast.

A Correction

The price of "Life: Outlines of General Biology," by Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson, published by Harper and Brothers, is $15 for the two volumes, and not $8, as was erroneously stated in the leading review published in the issue of September 16.

Contributors

EDNA LONIGAN, formerly chief statistician for the New York State Department of Labor, last winter gave a course of lectures on Capitalism at the New School for Social Research. She is a member of President Hoover's Committee on Social Trends.

LIAM O'FLAHERTY, the realistic Irish novelist, took part in the World War and in the Irish revolution; he has worked as a laborer in the United States, and has traveled over half the globe, from Brazil to the Near East. His impressions of a Soviet ship, appearing in this issue, are part of a book, "I Went to Russia," to be published this month by Harcourt, Brace.

T. S. MATTHEWS is the literary editor of Time. His first novel, "To the Gallows I Must Go," was published by Knopf in the spring of 1931.

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER is now a professor of History at Washington Square College of New York University. He is the author, in collaboration with Samuel Eliot Morison, of "The Growth of the American Republic."

HANSELL BAUGH has completed a translation of Rimbaud's prose and is working on a biography of the elder Henry James.

WALTON H. HAMILTON, author of "Current Economic Problems" and other works, is Southmayd Professor of Law at Yale University.

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